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## North Korea, Kim Jong-il and the missile fizzle

Harry der Nederlanden

Well before North Korea launched its seven missiles, numerous countries had expressed their opposition to the so-called test, but Kim Jong-il went ahead anyway. The actual launch was still a surprise to most experts on North Korea, however, for they considered the threat another bit of political theater on his part. There were far too many good reasons for Kim to refrain from launching his missiles. His greatest benefactors, China and South Korea, had expressed their strong opposition to such a move. In recent years North Korea has been receiving billions in aid from both countries, in the form of energy as well as rice and other goods. And there seemed little to be gained by actually pushing the button.

Done on the 4th of July, it was obviously designed as a provocation to the U.S. The act, however, seemed only to help unite every responsible government in the world against North Korea and to isolate it further. Japan immediately called for a meeting of the U.N. Security Council and asked for sanctions. Japan was supported by the U.S. and several other countries, but China, one of the members of the Security Council as well as of the six-party talks with North Korea, opposed sanctions. Russia did not support them either. This does not mean, however, that either country was pleased with Kim's action.

On more than one occasion, the North Korean economy has teetered on the brink of total collapse, causing nightmares for its nearest neighbors, South Korea and China, for then they would be overrun by tens of thousands of starving refugees. The northern border area is already a big problem for China. So neither wants sanctions that



might cause a teetering economy to collapse completely.

Six-party talks were broken off last September by North Korea when the U.S. applied sanctions against it for engaging in money laundering and counterfeiting U.S. currency through banks in Macao. Besides North Korea and the U.S., the other partners in the six-party talks are South Korea, China, Russia and Japan. The participants have been attempting to persuade Kim to set aside his nuclear weapons program in exchange for becoming part of the international community and increased aid. While the U.S. and Japan have been trying to apply pressure to North Korea, however, China and South Korea have been expanding aid. Neither tactic, neither the carrot or the stick, seems to have had much of an affect on the North Korean dictator.

North Korea has abandoned talks on previous occasions and been lured back with concessions. Threats and political theater have worked before for both Kim Jong-il and his father before him. In the meantime, Kim continues his barbaric, repressive regime, including the use of mass brain-

washing, concentration camps and a statist economy that has repeatedly brought starvation on a huge scale. Even most NGOs have withdrawn from the country,

for although the people badly need help, Kim only uses aid to bolster his military regime.

In the past North Korea had obvious allies in China and the USSR, but developments in those two countries in recent years have deepened the country's isolation. But even in the past it deliberately isolated itself, so much so that it began to be referred to as "the hermetic kingdom."

The missile fizzle prompted a great deal of jokes at North Korea's expense. Intent on displaying its strength and defiance of the world's only super power, Kim instead turned himself into a laughingstock. Fred Kaplan of the online magazine *Slate* hailed the failed test as a huge

See Missile fizzle on p. 2 . . .

### Reminder

There's a break of three weeks between this issue and the next.

Staff gets one week of vacation.

The next issue will be dated August 14.

We will check our messages and e-mails occasionally.

## Violence spreads from Gaza to Lebanon and beyond

Harry der Nederlanden

A little over two weeks ago, the story in the Middle East was the internal disintegration of Palestine, as factions within that battered country seemed to be leading their people to ever greater chaos. With a single act – an attack on an Israeli checkpoint and the abduction of a single Israeli soldier – the entire countenance of the area has altered dramatically.

Once again all the focus is on Israel's very violent reaction, first by its invasion of Gaza from different points, and then on the spread of military action into Lebanon. It is unclear who carried out the initial attack on the Israeli checkpoint from Gaza. It may have been a militant group acting on its own, but Hamas decided to

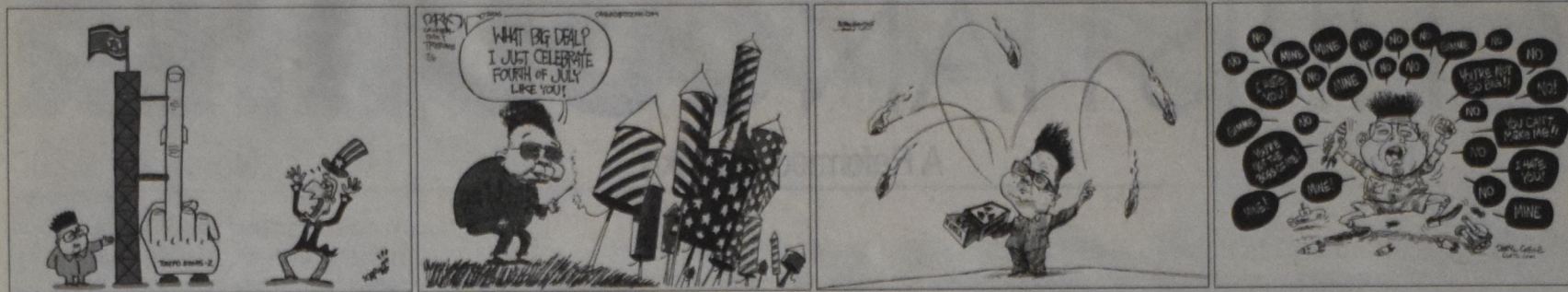


Palestinian housing before hostilities

back the action and "own" it. The Israeli incursion, quickly labeled as far out of proportion to the crime, See Violence on page 3 . . .

News

# North Korea: a cartoon essay



I've considered publishing an essay in cartoons several times before, but I've never really had room to publish more than a couple of cartoons. This week I ended up with a folder full of cartoons about North Korea and Kim Jong-il. They could almost serve as a skeleton outline for an essay, I thought to myself.

There's the cartoon of the missile as a vulgar gesture – giving Uncle Same the finger. Here the missile launch is portrayed as primarily

symbolic, an act of defiance to the great superpower that has deluded itself into thinking it can impose its rules on the rest of the world. But is it an act of bravery – or of juvenile bravado?

The cartoon showing Kim lighting his missile as part of America's 4th of July celebrations also highlights the act as a mockery and parody of U.S. ideals. In a way, it suggests a kind of jealousy on Kim's part, while it reminds us how little reason he and his

people have to celebrate freedom. Kim's declaration of national independence comes at the expense of any freedom for his people. The timing of the launch to coincide with a celebration also signals a nasty impulse to wreck someone else's joy with the threat of destruction.

There are two that portray Kim as an obnoxious child. The one of him as a child playing with matches underlines the risk he poses to himself as well as others. But it

also captures the recklessness and unpredictability of Kim's regime. To the rest of the world his actions often seem irrational and irresponsible, hence the frequent use of the word "gamble" to describe his actions. The tantrum cartoon similarly points out Kim's apparent arbitrariness, repeatedly changing course, seemingly at personal whim. It reminds us too how the fortunes of an entire country depend on the personality of a single individual, a seemingly

unstable and often petulant individual.

The mad scientist cartoon also plays on his irrationality. Madness, pride, genius – they are closely related.

The picture of Kim's and Bush's missiles both falling short in a perverse kind of parity laughs at the pride of both men. By emphasizing the fizzle, the impotence, it diminishes the threat and the fear. At the same time, it also hints at the contagiousness of folly and

## Missile fizzle... continued from p. 1

setback for Kim and a great bonus for Bush. The ill-considered launch not only showed the world Kim's folly, it also garnered more support for the Bush administration's view of the regime and its approach to negotiations.

Kaplan compared Kim to the bank robber who fires his gun at the ceiling to get attention – only to have a little flag pop out of the barrel with the word "Bang!" on it. Kaplan and a number of other commentators viewed the failed launch as grounds for dismissing North Korea's threats and its weapons program as negligible. The day before the launch North Korea had threatened all-out nuclear war with the U.S. if it attempted a preemptive strike against its Taepodong-2 missile, the only one of the seven capable of reaching U.S. territory.

Had the launch succeeded, however, Kaplan speculated, the international community would have reverted to its usual tendency of putting all the onus on Bush to get North Korea back to the negotiating table. Many Bush critics seem to share the opinion that North Korea only became dangerous when Bush labeled it part of the so-called "axis of evil." Even now some pundits said the launch was only a way for North Korea to compel the U.S. back to the table.

Bush's national security adviser Stephen Hadley downplayed the threat, saying, "A missile that fails

after 40 seconds is not a threat to the territory of the U.S." The other six missiles, short-range missiles of the scud variety, were dismissed as inconsequential. They may seem so to the U.S., but they are not so to Japan and South Korea, which are well within their range.

*Newshour* called the missile launches "less military than diplomatic." Quite obviously so, for without warheads they were clearly not part of an attack on anyone. Yet, testing missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads and threatening nuclear war sounds less than diplomatic. A former South Korean negotiator, quoted by CNN, described it as an attempt to blackmail the international community, extorting aid for its inept regime at gunpoint.

"Is he trying to force us to do something by defying the world?" asked Bush. "If he wants a way forward, ... he's got to verifiably get rid of his weapons program."

Although North Korea signed the Non-proliferation Treaty, it has been trying to develop nuclear weapons for about 20 years by most estimates. In 1993 and again in 1998, similar threats were effective in wringing more aid from the U.S. and other countries.

Said Jia Qingguo, of the international studies department at Beijing University: "Kim wants more cards to play in the six-party talks. But I think he has now miscalculated. Kim may think he is getting more

cards, but I think this will only make the voice of the hard-liners in the U.S. and Japan stronger."

And, indeed, although the Taepodong-2 failed, the Bush administration is once again promoting its missile defense program. When interviewed, Bush even speculated that had the Taepodong missile been headed toward the U.S., chances were pretty good that it could have been intercepted by existing defenses. The entire launch was being closely watched by American and Canadian observers in NORAD.

Japan was so upset that it was asking whether its constitution forbids a preemptive strike in the event Kim repeats the process. South Korea told Japan not to get hysterical, and when asked to join in exerting more pressure on Kim, China put the onus on the U.S. Despite billions of aid that it has been providing to North Korea, it denies that it has any special clout with Kim.

That may sound absurd, but suggests John Marquand of the *Christian Science Monitor*, Kim may indeed be caught up in his own world. He quotes Russell Leigh Moses of People's University: "I hear often that China is the key, which involves a set of policy steps Beijing can take that will bring about the outcome the allies want. But I have yet to see anyone show how if China does X, Pyongyang will do Y."

Kim's father reputedly warned

him many times that China would attempt to take over his regime one day, writes Marquand. So it is important for Kim to show that he is his own man. Kim's father, Kim Il Sung, North Korea's founder who turned himself into its god, established his regime on the concept of self-reliance called Juche. To maintain this cult, Kim cannot open his country to foreign influence. It depends on isolation, but that isolation has been extremely hard on the people of North Korea.

"Certainly, Mr. Kim's thoughts and strategy are a mystery," concedes Marquand. "But, long-time Pyongyang watchers say, it is clear that Kim does not want integration into the liberal, global order. Rather, his role is as a divinely mandated leader whose people live to serve him. In that role, Kim has much to be upbeat about in the past week after his missile test, and can tell himself a story such as this, they say:

*You are supreme general of the fifth-largest army in the world, and your missile program just made a major military statement. You were told not to test missiles, and you did. As a result, the world jumped. You are getting more media than Iran. Most importantly, you provoked the Americans, your sworn enemy for 50 years – and they did nothing. Chinese envoys arrived Monday with a message from President Bush. Propaganda in the near term*

*is easy: You show the Americans crawling to get you back to talks. You are the son of great leader Kim Il Sung, and you run the country, control the thoughts, and guide the people. Aides follow you with notepads, taking down every word, and publishing it as pure gold. You can go back to six-party talks, or not, depending on what's to get.*

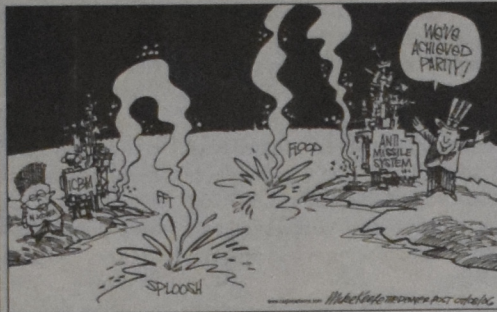
"Kim is not begging to return to six-party talks," argues Brian Myers, at the Department of North Koreanology at Korea University. "Kim is general, the 'military-first' architect. The last thing he wants is normalization with the enemy, or talks on prosperity. That puts him out unloading aid crates at the airport. He craves tension and crisis, and that's what he's got."

Myers argues that Pyongyang is a "paranoid nationalist" regime that needs an enemy to perpetually engage it so it retains a sense of purpose in the face of all odds.

"The North crosses every red line it can find, and does in the face of the world," says Myers, author of a book on North Korean literary styles. "This is characterized internally as signs of strength. In the 'Agreed Framework' of 1994, they presented the Americans as crawling to the negotiating table, as a surrender."

[The last part of this article is deeply indebted to a series of articles by John Marquand that appeared in The Christian Science Monitor.]

## Politics



violence. It's a game, a teeter-totter, but although it is a ridiculous game, we never entirely forget that it is being played with missiles – and they don't always fizzle.

The cartoon of Kim riding a missile cart pulled by a skeletal Korean is titled "North Korean development." If the missile is a symbol of Kim's personal power and prestige, it comes on the backs of an entire people. They have been driven, repressed, regimented and starved just so that the great leader can have one of the largest armies in the world and a nuclear missile.

While stinting at nothing to become part of the nuclear club, Kim has left the economy of his country at the level of a donkey cart drawn by human power.

Nuclear football. A game, a contest, played with the future of the entire globe at stake. Why? Just to see who can win? But we know it's a game without winners. Here Iran and North Korea are lined up opposite Bush. But last week we published a cartoon that showed Kim jumping up and down between Iran and the U.S. trying to draw attention to himself. Strange, isn't

it, that Kim so desperately craves the attention of his great enemy, as if he'd be nothing without it.

Maybe I'm reading too much into the cartoon (on the front page) of Kim with a gun to his own head, but at some point the overweening pride of dictators seems to blind them to the fact that they are on a course to self-destruction. It's almost a morality play – a warning to the rest of us: those who seek to erect hermetic kingdoms around themselves and seem to be elevating themselves to the level of gods are actually caught up in

a kind of self-loathing and self-destruction. Sadly, Kim Jong-il,

like his father before him, is taking an entire nation with him.

**Violence** ... continued from p. 1 caused widespread destruction, knocking out power to much of the Gaza population and leaving them without drinking water or sewage services. Roads, bridges and other infrastructure have also been destroyed. In a country where life was already difficult, it has been made that much harder. The only ones who have profited have been hardliners and militants on both sides.

Hizbollah, one of the most radical factions in Lebanon, jumped at the chance to spread the chaos further – and Israel obliged. After an interval of hope, the forces of destruction have once again been unleashed in the area.

According to the experts, there is little doubt that Iran, and perhaps Syria as well, has a hand in stirring things up. They have succeeded in diverting attention away from their own inability to create viable government and prosperous community to the common enemy.

Reacting to criticism from the European Union and the usual array of church organizations that Israel's military action is out of all proportion to the provocation, Yitzhak Herzog, an Israeli cabinet minister, said, "Anybody who calls this operation disproportionate has no clue about the facts on the ground. We have been attacked and bombarded for months and weeks. With all due respect to those who criticize us, if anything of the nature

happened in their homeland, they would have reacted much worse."

Israeli PM Ehud Olmert asked, "When was the last time the EU condemned the firing of rockets into Israel?" Indeed, very few Western news agencies have even bothered to report such shellings. They are old hat. When they are mentioned, they are described as ineffective and done with makeshift weaponry, as if that made such shelling more acceptable.

After its unilateral withdrawal from Gaza last summer, Israel expected the Palestinian Authority to make efforts to prevent such attacks on Israel. Within a few days after the withdrawal, however, the shellings resumed. Neither Fatah nor Hamas, it seems has the will or the ability to stop them. In fact, Hamas is suspected of sharing their know-how with other militant factions and so encouraging the continuous harassment of Israel.

On the Palestinian front, both sides were talking about negotiations as I wrote this, but with whom does Israel negotiate? No single responsible representative of the Palestinian people seems able to uphold any agreements or promises made. How does Israel negotiate with a party sworn to its destruction? Mahmoud Abbas was willing to negotiate, but he couldn't even control factions of his own party. Moreover, the repeated incursions by Israel do not help

the Palestinian people develop an effective authority and order.

What makes Olmert think that invading Gaza and Lebanon will improve things either in the short or long term is hard to say. He denies that Israel has any intention of toppling the Hamas government, but then why seize elected members of the government? What, then, are the motives behind the Israeli offensive? Simply to liberate one soldier? Israel has denied that. What is this offensive supposed to achieve? What will it accomplish? The answer, it seems to me, is just more violence and chaos.

But why do the Palestinians insist on firing rockets into Israel? All they do is call down more misery on the Palestinian people, for the Israeli reactions are always more lethal than the rockets. They do it to create "a balance of fear," the Palestinian militants told the *New York Times*. They may not be able to match Israel's weaponry or discipline, but they can spread destruction and fear.

Now, with Lebanon, the Hizbollah, and probably Iran and Syria also involved, the fear is contagious, spreading as far as Europe and North America. If Iran's involvement is demonstrated, how will the U.S. react? In the Middle East the sowers of violence keep getting the upper hand, and doors keep slamming shut.

## North Korean Christians

*The Christianity Today website carried an interview with Ronald Boyd-MacMillan, a writer for Open Doors who has made several trips to North Korea and has even talked with Kim Jong-il. He was asked about the success of Kim's father in wiping out the sizeable Christian population in that country.*

He was extremely thorough. I would say that was one of the most thorough cleansing of the land of Christians that's ever taken place, certainly in the 20th century. I remember meeting a refugee from North Korea a few years ago, and she talked about how she saw her mother take a little book and put it on the end of a knitting needle and push it deep into the sofa in her house. The girl went to school the next day, and the teachers played this game where they said, "Do your parents have any books that they read perhaps in secret? Let's play a little game, bring it in and we'll have a peek." Of course she dug up this book and it was a New Testament. When she left school that day, she was met by two men who said "you'll never see your parents again." And she never has. They were taken off to the labor camps. She was reassigned to another family. The cleansing was that thorough.

If you go to North Korea, you

get an education in biblical language. It's totally biblical except Kim Il Sung is a god. It's a very religious society.

In fact that's where the hope comes from, because it could be that the same thing could happen in North Korea that happened in China. Mao set up this religion, and when he died, the whole population then said, "Who's the true God?"

...If you become a Christian in North Korea, your first question is Do I flee or do I stay? If you stay, you live a lie. You have to go to the festivals, you have to say grace to Kim Il Sung you have to keep going to the statues and giving offering. You're completely caught up in the worship system. But you mustn't give the impression that your heart is not in it.

But if you flee, then you may die because if you're caught, you will be shot or put in a labor camp. If you decide to stay, your big question is, How do I hide my faith from those whom I love? How do I hide it from my wife?... How do I hide it from my children? Because, if you're caught, they all go to jail with you. These are dreadful dilemmas when you become a Christian.

For more, see: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/128/32.0.html>

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## Editorial

# Muslim stories and our story

Harry der Nederlanden

To try to understand something of what is happening in the Middle East and across the Muslim world by reading the daily newspapers and magazines is a hopeless occupation. There is so much history behind, far behind, current events that it is difficult to bring that context into view without becoming utterly lost in complexities. At least, that's how I feel trying to read up on the background of various countries, regions and factions, religious and political, in the Muslim world.

There is the history of colonialism of the 19th and early 20th centuries, during which many Muslim lands were divided and/or created by the different European powers. But the sectarian conflicts among the various Muslim groups, Shiites and Sunnis primarily, long predate that history. And Christians have of late been repeatedly reminded of the Crusades.

It's not my intention to try to summarize any of these long threads and to weave them into the tapestry of the present. Even after describing those threads, we'd only have begun, because a great deal of what is happening today is new to the Muslim world. The introduction of modern technology has brought population growth, the swift growth of cities, the demand for gainful employment for all these people, the education of these huge numbers of new people, the adoption of technologies that make modern urban life possible, and the urgent need to develop new social and political structures for the new way of life.

None of this is exactly a secret. These factors are as obvious as warts on a toad. But they don't exactly come hopping into view very often in *CC* as we seek to report something of what's happening in the world, particularly from a Christian perspective.

## Covering Islam

Part of *CC*'s mission is to report on the life of the global church of Christ, and especially on our church pages we have made an effort to remind ourselves that we are part of a persecuted church. In this day and age, a considerable share of that persecution has been visited on the church by Muslims and by Islamic societies. Although the intensity of such persecution varies from one predominantly Muslim country to another, in none of them are Christians free and equal citizens. We've detailed the various abuses often enough that I don't need to repeat them here.

*CC* has also devoted quite a bit of space to describe Muslim beliefs and ideology and how those beliefs work out in practice. In the process we have usually contrasted

them to Christian beliefs and to the norms and practices of our democratic societies. Although the purpose of such articles is to increase our understanding of a large portion of the world's peoples, let's face it – it has also been to show how they fail to measure up. When we say something complimentary about Muslim beliefs, practices and behavior, it has been more or less by accident. We don't go out of our way to make Muslims or their way of life look good. To tell the truth, of the more than a dozen books I've acquired over the last few years about Islam or the Islamic world only one has been a positive appreciation.

The most prominent reason we've been writing so much about Islam and Muslims, of course, is terrorism. A huge number of books have been published on Muslim themes since 9/11 in an effort to understand something about the roots of this hatred and violence directed toward "us". I put "us" in quotation marks because there isn't just disagreement about the roots and the nature of Muslim militancy and terrorism but also about who or what is the object of their rage. While Muslims may appreciate someone attempting to learn more about their religion, it can't thrill them to know that it's because we're treating it as a pathology or aberration.

Christians, especially Calvinists, should have some empathy here, for their beliefs have been treated in a similar way by "enlightened" academics and their journalist counterparts.

There have been those who have argued for a complete disconnect between the terrorist acts and Islam. This has been done in various ways. Islam is a religion of peace, some like to say, and those who commit these terrorist acts do so out of motives that have nothing to do with religion. Others see all violence as rooted in class resentment caused by poverty, marginalization, dispossession, and other injustices of global capitalism, so they also tend to ignore the role of beliefs and ideology. These are only a pretext. Still others cite more complex psychosocial factors for this explosion of suicide bombers and other acts of terrorism committed by Muslims.

In our efforts to understand what's happening in the world around us, we necessarily construct story lines onto which we try more or less successfully to thread contemporary events like varicolored beads onto a necklace.

## Modernity comes to the West

Recently I've been rereading a book published in 1978 from which I learned a great deal about the historical unfolding of Western society – *Prophecy and Progress: The Sociology of Industrial and Post-Industrial Society* by Krishan Kumar. It describes both the reflection on society that arose in the West – much of which came to be called sociology – and the large scale economic, social and political changes that prompted this reflection and that was further fostered by this reflection.

I have no intention of trying to summarize Kumar's richly detailed account here. It's enough for my purposes to name some of the themes. That will be enough to remind us of something we vaguely know, for it's part of our own story, our own experience and tradition. Reformed Christianity, especially the Kuyperian variety, is what it is largely because we were gifted with leaders who wrestled seriously with the problems thrown up by the seismic shocks to Western society that Kumar describes.

Beginning in the 18th century thinkers and leaders in the West began wrestling with that great transformation that historians dubbed the industrial revolution. It involved the division of labor, the application of scientific principles to labor, the use of capital to build factories and launch large-scale mining, the movement of workers from the countryside to the cities and so on. The dislocation and exploitation of these workers led to a loss of the kind of traditional social order that had prevailed in the villages for generations.

Centralization and rationalization of labor resulted in a concentration of power in the hands of the monied classes (instead of the landowners) and the workers had to fight for a power base for themselves.

In the process, social critics saw centuries-old traditions and organic relationships displaced by a more impersonal, dehumanizing order which Carlyle called "the cash nexus." The churches and Christian traditions lost their influence over the masses, and church attendance suffered a steep decline. "Alas, Alas!" cried Alfred de Musset. "Religion is vanishing.... We no longer have either hope or expectation, not even two little pieces of black wood in a cross before which to wring our hands.... Everything that was is no more. All that will be is not yet."

Those who placed their hopes in science predicted that within a couple of generations people would no longer have any use for the church or religion. In fact, intellectual leaders like Saint-Simon and Comte sought to make sociology, a sociology that welcomed the new order, into the new religion for the masses.

For several generations Christians were locked in a life-and-death struggle with historical forces that seemed to be inexorably destroying the faith. Groen van Prinsterer saw all the ills as flowing from a view of history spawned by the French Revolution. That was, perhaps, an overly intellectualistic interpretation of the process, but this gave rise to the Anti-revolutionary Party in The Netherlands under the leadership of Abraham Kuyper. It sought to organize Christians to oppose this wave of change that seemed to be carrying the West toward apostasy and destruction.

Why rehearse this history here in connection with our understanding of Islam? Because, as many historians have pointed out, Islam is in the throes of a similar revolution, one that compresses modernity and post-modernity into one. The pervasive sense among Muslims that their way of life is threatened with destruction is not a delusion. They are experiencing many of the same destructive forces that Christianity struggled against in the past. Many sociologists have summed up this traumatic process in the innocent-sounding phrase of the transition from a traditional to a modern economy, from an organic community to a mechanical or bureaucratic society. But it is felt as an attack on the spiritual foundations of their way of life.

And we in the West are the agents of these destructive forces. We are the enemy. Fundamentalist Muslims may be wrong in seeing the West as deliberately conspiring against Islam, just as many Christian fundamentalists were wrong in their wholesale opposition to modernity. But they are not wrong in seeing the West as a threat to their religion and their way of life. So it is little wonder that the Islamic world is caught up at one and the same time in a violent "civil war" and a "war" with these forces threatening their society from without. They are wrong, of course, in thinking that these destructive forces come only from without, for will or no their societies are undergoing radical changes and they will have to come to terms with them.

There are fundamental differences between Christianity and Islam that made it easier for Christians to adapt to these changes, but it was no cake-walk for Christians either. And the parallel is, of course, not exact. In some ways, the changes are coming at Muslims much faster and in a more virulent form. But I wanted to highlight this thread in the current clash between civilizations to awaken a little empathy for what Muslims are going through.

Many moderate Muslims are seeking a way that does not involve head-on confrontation with the West. To help them, we need to develop stories other than the ones we are almost naturally prone to tell, ones that open up a way to a new future.

## Christian Courier

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## Letters

## Farel Seminary and the Reformed Evangelical Alliance

It seems that I had better respond to the remarks made by Lippe and Ina De Haan about the name: "Reformed Evangelical Alliance" in the CC of June 26, since I am one of those who decided on that name all these many years ago. So you get it "from the horse's mouth" so to speak. It was in the early 1980s when a number of Reformed Christians in the province of Quebec got together to try and unify and bundle the evangelism efforts among the French speaking population. At that time the group consisted of 12 people, if I remember correctly. We were Christian Reformed, Presbyterian, United, Anglican and Brethren in Christ. The initiative for the meeting was taken by us, the CRC people in the group.

Our aims were to publish a Reformed magazine in French. This was realized in the publication of "La Parole". We made a wonderful start but were not able to maintain it, so that at this time it no longer exists. But the dream is still there.

We also planned to establish a French speaking training school for pastors and lay leaders for the small and few Reformed groups and congregations in the province of Quebec and eventually mission fields in French speaking countries. The beginning of it was already there in courses taught by Rev. David Craig and friends at the Presbyterian Church St Marc in Ste Foy, a suburb of Quebec City. We called the new initiative *Institut Farel*, which later on was changed to just *Farel*.

This seminary now is located in the heart of Montreal and the Lord is blessing it beyond our expectations. It still hurts me that the Christian Reformed Church withdrew its support for *Farel*, because it did not have a future. The project was not glamorous enough, it was too weak and we could not show them how many students and professors we expected to have in five years time. *Farel* is now supported by a number of smaller Reformed denominations and by the Reformed Seminary in Aix-en-Provence in France. The Lord has been faithful and we praise him!

Third: we planned to come to the establishment of French speaking Reformed

churches in Quebec. This goal was realized in the formation of the fledgling denomination under the name of Reformed Church in Quebec. They are small in number, and weak in human assets, but every Sunday they gather for worship in seven different places.

Now to come back to the original group of 12 mentioned above: I vividly remember the day that we joined hands and hearts in a meeting in Montmorency when we sang the "A Toi La Gloire" with a heart full of joy and tears in our eyes. We felt that we were living a historic moment in the history of the Church.

The group needed a name of course. It was a covenant between a number of people coming from different denominations. But we had the same vision, the same hope and the same convictions. So we used the word *Alliance* rather than Association or Society. The word *Reformed* was never questioned. It was an obvious nomer.

But then we were faced with the fact that among our evangelical brothers and sisters we reformed are always a little suspect, because we baptize babies. And that is a "liberal" thing to do. Among them we are the only ones who do that. So we wanted it to be absolutely clear that we are "evangelicals" in the sense that we are not liberals. We believe that a Christian lives by the grace of God and by faith in Jesus Christ. We believe that a person must be born again by the Holy Spirit. To be a Christian means more than just saying "Jesus Christ is LORD," it means that your heart has changed and you are washed in the blood of the Lamb. So we chose to use the word *Evangelical*. We did that deliberately, without any qualms and we do not feel that we need to apologize for it. But we are *Reformed Evangelicals* which means that among our fellow evangelicals we take a specific doctrinal position based on Scripture and the Reformed Calvinian Creeds.

I hope I have answered questions and am ever ready to answer them. Feel free to write.

Martin D. Geleynse

## Hirsi Ali: No friend of Christianity

Dear Mr. Antonides:

It certainly doesn't come as a surprise that you are a fervent (and uncritical) admirer of Hirsi Ali. However, in your zeal to embrace every enemy of Islam, you seem to overlook that she is a secularist who has no use for Christianity either.

It seems to have escaped your notice that she wants to abolish the type of schools that you probably attended as a boy. Her aim is to eliminate all separate religion-based schools. Educational choice according to worldview has been an integral part of Dutch society since 1917 and most people are satisfied with it, but that is irrelevant to Hirsi Ali. She wants to have only secular schools so that Islamic schools can be closed, and never mind the effects of such a measure on Christians who prefer to send their children to a Catholic or Protestant school.

If you were a lapsed and embittered Calvinist and engaged in an unremitting crusade against Calvinism and if the Liberal party had accepted you as a political candidate, then it would have done what the VVD did when she put Hirsi Ali on their list of candidates. It was an insult to the Muslims in The Netherlands.

Quite understandably, many people in The Netherlands are rejoicing at Hirsi's departure, but not because they are enemies of freedom, as you claimed, but because they realize that peaceful relations between Muslims and non-Muslims are not going to be attained by demonizing Islam and hoping that it will disappear, in the manner of Hirsi Ali. The roughly one million Muslims here are not going to leave or all renounce their faith. People who have a grip on reality and who spurn fanaticism will start from there.

To quote Job Cohen, the mayor of Amsterdam, "We must hold things together." Quite right. And to this end someone like Hirsi Ali, who is driven by vengeance, seeking publicity and forever inciting confrontation, is no help. Good riddance to this woman.

I'm not suggesting that she has no right to her opinions, simply that she has no place in parliament [Tweede Kamer] and that she is not a good Dutch citizen.

Koos Schipper

## Antonides replies to Schipper

Mr. Schipper manages to attribute three things to me in his first two sentences that are untrue. I do not think it useful to debate with someone who tries to dismiss my position by caricature. But for the record I want to make one brief point.

Someone who has renounced the Muslim faith and then becomes an atheist may yet have insights about the religion she has renounced that may be helpful for Christians. The main point of my article about Ayaan Hirsi Ali is that she deserves credit for risking her life in standing against radical Islam that fills its adherents with hatred and the belief that Christianity and Western democracy are evil.

Many, including some Christians, think that she and other critics of Islam are the problem and recklessly provoke the righteous anger of Muslim believers. I disagree. Instead, I believe that in this controversy Jesus' parable about the dishonest manager applies. Here Jesus taught that some people of this world are more "shrewd" than the people of the light. (See Luke 16:1-9.)

Harry Antonides

## Apologies to the translator

My humblest apologies for the omission of the name Herman J. De Vries Jr., who translated Rev. Ron Van der Spoel's letters giving his impressions of America during his semester at Calvin Seminary in Grand Rapids. Herman De Vries is a professor at Calvin College and Chair of Germanic & Asian Languages. He holds the Queen Juliana Chair at Calvin College inaugurated by Queen Juliana herself during a visit in 1952. It was the first academic chair established at Calvin.

For those who wish to read more of Van der Spoel's letters or to read them in the original Dutch, here's a link to the Nederlands Dagblad website: <http://www.nd.nl/htm/dossier/calvincollege/rechts.htm>

editor

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## Growing together

# British Methodists seek life together with 'Contradictory Convictions'

Kathleen LaCamera

EDINBURGH, Scotland (UMNS) — As the more than 400 representatives to the British Methodist Conference tackled high profile issues such as nuclear disarmament and the blessing of same sex relationships, they also were aware that their diverse convictions could make for contentious debate.

The June 23-29 conference marked the first time the official British Methodist policy-making body has ever been held in Scotland.

The church lives with diversity and disagreement, said the Rev. Clive Marsh as he presented a report entitled "Living with Contradictory Convictions." The report was commissioned by the denomination in 2005.

"The church is the Body of Christ and carries the conflict of disagreement within it," he said.

Reflecting on the "theological implications of being a church that has to live or contend with different and mutually contra-

dictory convictions," the report acknowledges that diversity and disagreement have been a catalyst for growth and new life as well as pain and division ever since the church began.

It also points to the limited understanding any one person can possess, encouraging the church to reflect long and hard on whose personal stories it listens to and how willingly it engages with diverse people and communities.

During a plenary discussion of

the report, lay representative Peter Smith cautioned the conference on the dangers of simply going through the motions of listening.

"Sometimes telling the story becomes a diversion to those listening from what [those telling the story] are saying to us," said Smith. As an openly gay man, he added, he would like to be asked a question other than "how long have you been gay?" by fellow Methodists.

"We must ask how stories challenge us and our experience in the past and in the present," Smith said. "Ask yourselves, 'what do these stories say to me and to the church.'"

The Rev. John Walker, a clergy representative, called the report a "cool document for a cool church."

A minister in the Stock-on-Trent area of central England, he felt the report didn't address his "post bag in which we are dealing with the blood and guts of Methodism."

Another clergy member from London, the Rev. Samuel McBratney, thought the report needed to go further. He said he would like to see more specific recommendations about how to go about being the Body of Christ together in the midst of profound disagreement. He also wondered why the experience of other denominations had not been included.

Conference members had the chance to test their resolve to "live with contradictions" during plenary debate over the church's blessing of same-sex partnerships.

After several hours of debate in which personal experience, Biblical tradition, theological ambiguity and world church relations were touched on, the conference voted to accept the denial of official church blessing to same-sex couples.

The conference grappled with the role of funding in supporting the search for peace in the Middle East, noting issues of land and security still dominate relations between Israel and Palestine.

During debate on peacemaking and the ethics of modern warfare representatives — which included retired and active British armed forces personnel — the conference took an official stand against replacement of Britain's Trident nuclear submarines fleet.

Conference youth were highly visible during a session on ethical investment, particularly voicing concerns over a move to allow the Methodist Church to invest in the

Nestle Corporation.

Youth President Kevin Jones said he and other young people found attempts to clean up Nestle's corporate image by selling fairly-traded coffee unconvincing. Jones explained only 200 of the 3 million farmers providing coffee to Nestle are fair trade coffee producers.

Many churches, including British Methodist, have boycotted Nestle products in the past because the organization's history of questionable corporate practices, including the selling of baby milk formula to mothers in areas where the safe water supply, needed to make the formula, was in question.

Despite the concerns, the conference agreed there was 'no compelling justification' to avoid investing in Nestle and found the benefits of dialogue with the company as an investor could be worthwhile.

The Rev. Graham Carter, newly-appointed British Methodist president, told United Methodist News Service that he experienced a real sense of "people sharing in a journey together" at the conference.

"We have widely differing opinions," observed Carter, "but wide difference doesn't stop people wanting to hold together, even if you feel the 'other side' is wrong."

Bishop William Oden, ecumenical officer for the United Methodist Council of Bishops and a U.S. representative at the meeting, said he found the conference "vigorous and good humored."

"There's good debate. Our [U.S.] debate is not so civil," he admitted.

Oden also said he appreciated the way British Methodism deals with unanswerable questions. "[British Methodists are] asking if there can be a space between condemning and condoning.... There are some things for the good of the church that can't be decided. Given time and prayer, the church can find solutions."

In the struggle to deal with contentious issues like same-sex attraction, both the Anglican communion and the large Presbyterian Church in the U.S. have also found it necessary to commission reports on how to continue in unity despite deep differences of opinion.

## Eternal Student

Peter Schuurman



## Children, teach your parents well

You may be shocked to hear my wife, Joy, is being kicked quite often these days. Let me reassure you, however, that this is not due to an abusive work situation or any delinquent neighbours. This is a good sort of kicking. We are expecting to have a baby boy this September.

We are absolutely elated. This is something for which we both hoped and prayed. We have harboured dreams for years — before being married even — that someday we would be parents and raise a family. Now if I examine my own dreams closely, I would have to confess that there is a definite expectation that raising children is something that will make me happy. Children, after all, are a blessing.

Is that what children are for? To make us happy? I stumbled across this recent *Time* magazine article (June 19-26) entitled "Does Fatherhood Make You Happy?" The research is not all that encouraging. The article states that:

*Studies reveal that most married couples start out happy and then become progressively less satisfied over the course of their lives, becoming especially disconsolate when their children are in diapers and in adolescence, and returning to their initial levels of happiness only after their children have had the decency to grow up and go away.*

There is something counter-intuitive in that for me. Aren't children coveted because they exist for the happiness of their parents?

### Psychological testing

I have a friend — a gentle, intelligent guy with a good sense of humour, who shocked me with a story of his experience as a parent.

"My eight-month-old son was screaming so loud and so constantly," he confessed, "it began to wear me down. Days and days of poor sleep, noise, and no apparent reason for it. At one point when the screaming was especially shrill, I felt the urge to go into the room and shake the child. I had to physically remove myself from the house for a few minutes in order to compose myself. It's a part

of me I don't know or like very well."

Well, if a child can do *that* to a man like this, my dreams need some re-working. I don't dream of colicky babies and tantrums. I dream rather of a cooing child smiling up at me as I sit on a chair on the patio, or a young boy kicking a soccer ball across the lawn, or even better, a young man taking care of the landscaping through the summer. Where did I get these images, I wonder?

### Happiness and holiness

I am being a little facetious. I'm not so naïve as to expect perfect Lawn Boy progeny. But if I was entirely honest, I would admit there does float deep within me an expectation that children bring warmth and fulfillment more than heartache and trauma.

Gary Thomas is a Christian writer who helped me rearrange these expectations. The sub-title of his book on marriage is: "What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?" He writes about marriage as a spiritual discipline more than as a ticket to bliss. Likewise parenting. What if children exist to shape our souls as much as we exist to nurture theirs? It's a radical thought for a culture founded on the trinity of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I also stumbled on a book entitled *The Fussy Baby* by Dr. William Sears, one of the parenting gurus. What struck me in this book is that he says if you have a wonderful, easy-to-parent child who makes you happy every day, you are not really parenting. It is the fussy baby — the difficult, rebellious child that makes a married couple into wise, *bonafide* parents, if they are open to the learning. The patience, consistency, and unceasing grace that is required for the unruly offspring is what makes you into a mature adult.

Should we pray for a rambunctious little rascal?

Peter Schuurman is the Christian Reformed Education Mission Leader and resides in Guelph, Ontario.



## Stewardship

# Trade, energy, and the rebalancing of global power

James W. Skillen

Today in the international arena we are witnessing a turn toward anarchy that seemed to have been held in check during the Cold War. It is the kind of anarchy that Americans did not anticipate after the collapse of the Soviet Union, because American preeminence was supposed to secure a world order in which democracy and prosperity could spread worldwide.

Instead, what we see is a determined quest among the nations to achieve greater self-determination, often precisely in opposition to American preeminence. And that quest includes new modes of international networking to rebalance power in the world. Americans may not be recognizing and coming to grips with these developments quickly enough.

Consider, for example, the collapse of global trade talks in Geneva on July 1. Representatives from 149 countries who are members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) quit their negotiations early because of hardened positions that would not yield to compromise. The current round of WTO talks (called the Doha round, which started in 2001 in Doha, Qatar) was supposed to be about development – particularly the economic development of poorer countries. And the chief goal was to reach agreement on reductions of American and European agricultural subsidies so poorer countries could expand their own agricultural sectors and sell more products on world markets. The Bush administration's representative, who was not the only dissident in the negotiations, insisted on coupling other free-trade issues with subsidy reductions but got nowhere.

The point to emphasize is that the U.S. was stymied in Geneva in a portentous way. The world's largest economy, agricultural producer, and military power became just one country among many, with too few allies to overcome unyielding opposition from whole blocs of nations in order to reach a compromise. And who was the leader of the largest bloc of opposing countries? It was the Indian minister of commerce and industry, Kamal Nath. Keep in mind that Nath represents the government that the U.S. is now trying to win to its side through a new nuclear energy pact. We want India to be more closely aligned with us in order to help balance the growing power of China and Russia. But India is going to look after India first, thank you, and that means opposing the U.S. in one setting while cooperating in another, all in its own interests.

And there is more to this illustrative story. India recently participated as an invited observer in a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a Chinese-led grouping of nations which are developing an energy alliance. The SCO includes Russia, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan. In addition to India, the SCO also invited Pakistan, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Iran to participate as observers. Yes, that's right, Iran, our enemy, together with three of our allies. Moreover, the American request to be included as an observer in the meetings was rejected by the SCO members.

You see, the new world order that Americans may have hoped for, in which the U.S. leads and other nations cooperate, is not the world that is emerging. Nor does it appear that Americans are coming to grips with the implications of this weakening leadership role of the United States in world affairs. Our vast military power achieves less and less. North Korea and Iran, with sympathy from China and Russia, are playing their game, not ours. And countries that we want to count in our alliance network are rapidly developing new networks to provide a balance of power against American hegemony. We and our political leaders need to catch up with what's going on in the world and to work quickly to develop an approach to cooperation and leadership commensurate with these changing realities.



## Steward's hands

In the beginning God created the Earth. He gave mankind a job to do and he provided us the resources to do it. We read about that in the opening chapter of the Bible. We are to be fruitful, to multiply and fill the earth, subdue it and rule over the fish of the sea and over every living creature (Gen. 1:28). God provided every seed bearing plant and every fruit bearing tree for food.

After the flood, God re-issues the mandate but expands it: "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall upon all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything." (Gen. 9:2, 3)

Though some vegetarians might make something of the earlier mandate and non-vegetarians might take comfort in the expanded mandate, our responsibility to be wise stewards of animals is common. God asks us to tend his garden and to rule over all animal life. They are given into our hands.

Edith and I have the privilege of raising chicks to egg-laying chickens for other farmers who then provide our stores with eggs for your table. We also have sheep and geese and, until more recently, free-running ducks and chickens. I wrote "recently" because we have been having trouble with foxes and raccoons. We've been able to deal with the foxes but the raccoons have been a more serious problem.

On occasion, a raccoon will get trapped in my small animal trap (designed for squirrels). When I look at the beautiful creature trapped in my cage, I can't help but admire how beautifully God created these animals. But I also notice the 'fear and dread' of me as I come near. Maybe the creature will learn not to come back. Even so, I know I have to keep the raccoons away and provide a safe environment for our ducks and chickens. It helps me understand God's mandate to us through Noah. It's about purpose and balance along with respect for all the creatures God gives us to rule.

One day, though, there is a preferred future – a better vision for creation. One day, "The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat ... the cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat

## Reflections on Stewardship

Rick De Graaf

straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra.... They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah 11: 6-9)

In the meantime, you and I need to continue to be good stewards of creation. Raccoons and foxes have a place in creation, but presently they still have a taste for ducks and chickens. This forces me to protect the animals under my care from them. Our farmers have a special calling in caring for our land and raising food for us in a wise and stewardly way. In doing so, however, they often need to coexist and keep wildlife in check – at least until that day when "the lion will eat straw like the ox." When wild animals multiply and invade, I need to act to protect the animals under my care. Each time I find another carcass of a duck or chicken from another night raid, I'm reminded that one day a duck will be able to sleep beside a fox or a raccoon. I look forward to that day in Isaiah's vision.

Being a wise steward means that we need to minimize our 'footprint' on this world's resources. Too many species have been driven to extinction because we did not respect their needs – and now their footprints are lost. What is not lost is our need to respect and manage this world's resources – meeting our needs as well as all of God's creatures under our rule.

**Stewardly Tip:** Count the Calories: Whether we are a vegetarian or not, we can all benefit from tracking our calorie intake. Most of us eat too much. Excess strains our health and makes excessive demands on the food supply chain. Edith uses the "Weightwatchers" point system to help balance our diet and keep our intake in check.

**Readers:** Share your Stewardly Tips so that we all can make better use of the resources God has entrusted to us. Submit your suggestion and your contact information so that we can acknowledge your contribution or ask for more details.

**Next issue:** Searching Questions

Rick DeGraaf works for Christian Stewardship Services in Markham, Ontario. Rick's email: rickd@cssservices.ca



James W. Skillen is President of the Washington-based Center for Public Justice. Go to [www.cpjjustice.org](http://www.cpjjustice.org) to read *Capital Commentary*, the quarterly Public Justice Report and other comment on politics and world events.

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## Church

## Putin warns of 'clash of civilizations' at Moscow religious summit

Sophia Kishkovsky

Moscow (ENI) – More than 200 religious leaders from several dozen countries met in Moscow for the World Summit of Religious Leaders, which adopted a resolution addressed to the leaders of the Group of Eight (G8) countries meeting in St. Petersburg on July 15-17.

"Attempts are being made to divide the world along religious or ethnic lines, to drive a wedge first of all between Christianity and the Islamic world," Russian President Vladimir Putin said in his July 3 address to the gathering. "The world is practically being forced into a conflict of civilizations."

Russia holds the presidency of the group of the world's leading industrialized powers this year and has sought to assert itself in a number of spheres from geopolitics to business, and now religion.

Putin promised to inform the G-8 leaders of the results of the religious summit, in his address to the opening ceremony at Moscow's President Hotel, a

high-security compound that was used by Communist Party leaders and is still run by the Kremlin.

Patriarch Alexei II of the Russian Orthodox Church, which initiated the summit, emphasised the role of morality in avoiding conflicts. Ayatollah Muhammad Ali Tashkiri of Iran praised Putin's efforts for seeking common ground with Islam and stressed that Islam is a religion of peace.

Israel's Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yona Metzger, who leads mainly Jews of European descent, supported him but also lashed out at those who deny the Holocaust.

The Vatican delegation, led by Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, is the largest, the latest indication of a reported thaw in relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church since the election of Pope Benedict XVI.

Many of the world's top religious leaders are participating, including World Council

of Churches general secretary Samuel Kobia, Pope Shenouda of Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Church and the Grand Mufti of Syria, Baderddin Hassoun.

The religion summit's statement, to be adopted at the end of the meeting on July 5, will address questions of terrorism and family values, organizers have said.

Still, several major religious leaders were absent. In an interview with Rossiya, Russia's main state television channel, Metropolitan Kirill, the chairperson of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, said the Dalai Lama was not invited so as not to jeopardize Tibetan Buddhists' fragile negotiations with the Chinese government.

At a news conference in June, Kirill said the Pope was not invited so as not to "mix historical events." Benedict's predecessor, Pope John Paul II, had for years publicly expressed his desire to visit Russia, but the Russian Orthodox Church resisted such a visit.

## Moltmann declared No 1 in 20th century at theology world cup final



Stephen Brown

Geneva (ENI) – German Protestant Juergen Moltmann has been declared the greatest theologian of the 20th century in the final round of the Systematic Theology World Cup that took place on the Internet while the world's top soccer tournament was happening in Germany.

"Moltmann's relevance for his age, as well as his impact on church and academia was considered to be more significant," noted Finnish theologian Patrik Hagman who staged the four-week contest on the Web site <http://shrinkinguni.blogspot.com/>

Thirty-two theologians were put down for the qualifying groups when the theology tournament opened on June 9, with 16 of them going through to final heats. The online poll matches followed the timetable of the World Cup run by FIFA, global soccer's governing body. The final pitted Moltmann against Swiss Roman Catholic Hans Urs von Balthasar.

The contest was decided by visitors to the Internet site who were asked to rate the two finalists on five criteria linked to creativity, relevance, permanence, and impact on the Church and on the academic world.

Moltmann won four of the five polled categories as well as the overall vote, but von Balthasar's works were considered by the majority to have a more timeless quality, Hagman noted.

Born in Hamburg in 1926, Moltmann is considered one of the most important Reformed theologians of the latter half of the 20th century and is known for stressing Christian hope and the solidarity of the "crucified God" with humanity.

Moltmann beat Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, in the quarter-finals, and went on to reach the final after beating Catholic Karl Rahner in the semi-final.

Von Balthasar, who died in 1988, beat Protestant Wolfhart Pannenberg in the quarter-finals and faced US Lutheran Robert W. Jenson in the semi-finals.

Born in Lucerne, Switzerland, in 1905, von Balthasar was reputed to be Pope John Paul II's favorite theologian. He was trained as a Jesuit, but left the order to found a secular institute dedicated to the cultural transformation of society.

## Southern Baptists reaffirm prohibition against alcohol

Chris Herlinger

New York (ENI) – The Southern Baptist Convention, the biggest Protestant denomination in the United States, has said no one who drinks "alcoholic beverages" should belong to any denominational trustee board.

"The use of alcohol as a beverage can and does impede our testimony for the Lord Jesus Christ," said Jim Richards, executive director of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, at the denomination's June 13-14 annual meeting in Greensboro, North Carolina.

An amendment successfully moved by Richards at the Greensboro meeting urged the exclusion of Southern Baptists who drink from election to the convention's boards and committees. The resolution is not binding on the 16.2-million-member denomination.

Supporters of the action contended it was necessary because some Christians wrongly believed that Scripture allowed them to drink, the Baptist Press news service reported.

But the Rev. Tom Ascol, opposing the

action, referred to a New Testament account of Jesus at a wedding. "Christ turned water into wine," he said.

Delegates also approved a resolution that urged church members not to abandon US public schools. The denomination has been critical for many years of the curriculum of public schools as being too liberal. But the measure that was approved called on members to try to be a "godly influence" on the schools.

## Churches and faith groups urge Harper to do more for Darfur

Toronto – Several Christian denominations and other faith groups joined in writing to Prime Minister Stephen Harper commending the Canadian government for recently increasing its contributions toward ending suffering in Darfur, Sudan, but also strongly urging that more be done.

"Canadians welcome the recent Darfur Peace Agreement but remain deeply concerned about the continuing crisis and the challenges faced by humanitarian organizations in their efforts to address the increasing need for food, medical attention, and shelter in the region. Sustained security will be required to stabilize displaced populations and enable aid organizations to attend to their needs," says the letter, which was signed by representatives of Christian, Hindu, Sikh, Jewish, and Muslim faith groups. The Christian Reformed Church was also a signatory, along with Mennonite, Anglican, Presbyterian, Baptist and other churches.

"Canada's positive contribution to the peace process and its recent pledges to the humanitarian agencies operating in Darfur and to the African Union's mission in Sudan are

important and praiseworthy initiatives," said Wendy Gichuru, the United Church's program coordinator for East and Central Africa.

She added, however, that the international community, including Canada, needs to pay much greater attention to the security of civilians in Darfur.

"Both parties to the Peace Agreement continue to violate the ceasefire and the Government of Sudan has a long history of signing agreements only to renege on its obligations," said Gichuru.

She explained this is why this fragile agreement requires substantial additional support from the international community, including sustained pressure on the Sudanese government, if it is to succeed.

In addition, she says, the faith groups' letter asks the Canadian government to

\* increase Canada's diplomatic presence in Khartoum

\* press on with its international leadership role on Darfur, paying particular attention to ensuring that the signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement abide by

the conditions and timetable to which they have agreed and that all ceasefire agreements are observed

\* be a fair share contributor to the necessary financial, material, human, and logistical resources to fully support a guarantee of security in the region through a United Nations peacekeeping presence to enhance the African Union's efforts

\* work with others in engaging all diplomatic means available to address the legitimate concerns of groups that either do not yet form part of the Darfur Peace Agreement or that have a direct stake in a resolution of the conflict, including rebel groups, civil society organizations, and victims

\* immediately increase contributions to humanitarian relief efforts such as those of the United Nations' World Food Program beyond the recently announced commitments

Gichuru said the faith groups hope to have the opportunity, as a follow-up to the letter, to meet with the Prime Minister to discuss their call to action for Canada to help bring real and lasting peace to Darfur.

## Church

## Theologians launch first Africa Bible Commentary

**Fredrick Nzwili**

Nairobi (ENI) – African theologians have launched the first African Bible Commentary, or ABC as it has been dubbed, in Nairobi, with the support of Kenya's retired president Daniel arap Moi.

"It is my hope the LORD may use the ABC to draw its readers closer to God and to ignite a fire of spiritual awakening in Churches throughout Africa and the world," said Moi during the official launch of the commentary on July 5.

Moi, an evangelical Christian, described the volume as a significant achievement and an outstanding landmark for African Christianity. It would counteract a perception that Africa is plagued by disease, corruption, violence and conflicts, by stressing a fascinating and special side of the continent, he said.

"It is a continent of spiritual dynamism

and fervency, of untold natural mineral and energy resource, with the fastest Church growth rate, and boundless potential," said Moi.

The 1600-page volume, a product of five years research by 70 contributors in 25 countries was edited by Tokunboh Adeyemo, a former executive secretary of the Association of Evangelicals in Africa (AEA) and now the executive director of the Centre for Biblical Transformation.

The AEA sponsored the research for the text, which addresses African contemporary problems such as HIV/AIDS, female genital mutilation, refugees, ethnic conflict and witchcraft from a biblical perspective.

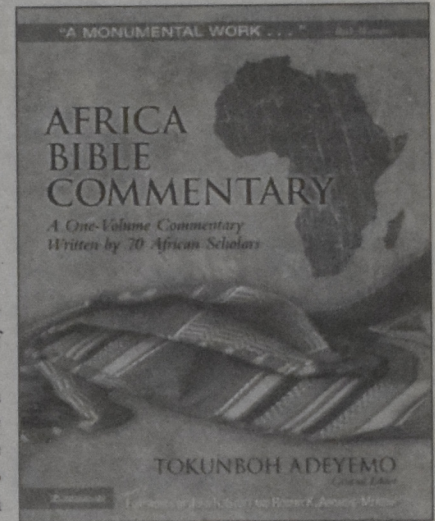
The writers have sought to dispel fears this was intended to replace the Bible, stressing the commentary is intended as an exposition of the Scriptures, as seen through the eyes of the African scholars.

"This is a commentary that seeks to make clear the Bible to Christians in Africa," Adeyemo told journalists.

In an interview with the *Sunday Nation* newspaper on July 2, Adeyemo said despite rapid growth of the Church, it is like a "child suffering from malnutrition". The distended belly in the child represents its large numbers, while the general poor health corresponds with lack of impact of Christianity in Africa.

"How else would you explain so much corruption in the African continent?" He asks. "So much suffering in Africa yet some of the people behind these acts confess to being Christians and answer to Christian names."

The writers hope the use of African proverbs, metaphors and stories will make the Bible speak to African believers in the villages and cities across the continent.



The first book is published in English. It will later be available in French, Swahili, Amharic, Portuguese, Yoruba, Afrikaans and Zulu versions are also planned.

## Facing income loss, German Protestant church seeks wide reforms

**Bishop Wolfgang Huber**



**Frauke Brauns**

Bielefeld, Germany (ENI) – In the face of declining income and loss of members, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), the country's main Protestant umbrella, is proposing sweeping organizational changes, including cutting the number of pastors by a quarter over the next 25 years.

"If you can no longer afford to do everything then you have to set priorities," the EKD chairperson, Bishop Wolfgang Huber, wrote in an introduction to the reform proposals published by the group's council, or top governing body on July 6.

The Protestant umbrella grouping fears that by 2030 it will have lost a third of its members and 50 per cent of its income. It currently groups about 26 million Protestants, or almost a third of Germany's 82 million people.

Currently, the EKD is an umbrella for

23 autonomous regional churches whose boundaries in many cases still follow the borders of the German princely kingdoms of 1815.

In the 110-page document outlining the reform proposals, the EKD proposes cutting the number of regional churches to no more than 12, while also reducing the total number of Protestant pastors from the current 22,000 to 16,500 by 2030. There would also be as-yet unquantified reductions in the number of other church employees.

Still, some church leaders said they were sceptical about the proposals to merge the regional churches.

"This is a typical paper produced by representatives of big churches for the big churches," said Bishop Juergen Johannesdotter of the regional church of Schaumburg-Lippe, which has about 63,000 members and is the second-smallest regional church in the EKD.

The reform proposals were drawn up over a two-year period by a commission presided by Huber that analysed the quality of Sunday services, baptism, marriage ceremonies, funerals, pastoral care, Sunday schools, confirmation classes and church bureaucracy.

"The idea is to offer services that people need and will use," Christof Vetter, the EKD spokesperson told Ecumenical News International.

The paper is intended to start a discussion that will culminate at a church congress in 2007 in Wittenberg, to be attended by representatives of all regional churches and church institutions.

This will be followed by a "decade of reforms" that it is intended will be concluded by 2017, the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation unleashed by Martin Luther in Wittenberg.

## Ousting of bishop 'hits' Mugabe bid to get churches to toe party line

Harare, (ENI) – President Robert Mugabe's bid to control churches has been dealt a severe blow by the ousting of one of his "praise-singers," Bishop Peter Nemapare, as president of the Zimbabwe Council of Churches, the independent *Standard* newspaper reports.

Nemapare, a bishop in the African Methodist Church in Bulawayo, was voted out by more than 55 bishops and heads of denominations who attended a meeting on July 5, the *Standard* reported on July 10.

The paper quoted some who attended the meeting as saying Nemapare was "accused of working in collusion with the ruling party" to co-opt Christians into Zanu-PF, which has ruled Zimbabwe since it gained independence from Britain in 1980.

The newspaper said delegates were incensed that Nemapare and ZCC general secretary Densen Mafinyane were quoted on television declaring their support for the ruling party of President Mugabe.

"The government stands accused of committing gross human rights violations including genocide, destroying people's homes in the middle of winter and electoral fraud," said the newspaper.

The report followed criticism of

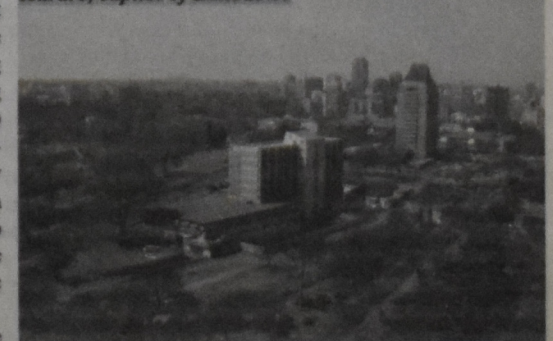
Council of Churches (ZCC), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (EFZ) and Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) have held several meetings with politicians over the past two months over the crisis in Zimbabwe. Some church groups have accused them of being manipulated by Mugabe's government.

The media group accused the state media of lacking depth in its reporting of recent meetings between the church leaders and Mugabe, as well as its coverage of the Zimbabwe National Day of Prayer held in Harare on June 25, which the head of state and his family attended.

It said the stories did not provide details on what the church initiative entailed or question chances of succeeding when previous efforts had failed.

The watchdog said the government run *Herald* and the *Chronicle* newspapers sought to depict the June 26 event as a National Day of Prayer and "as a precursor to the Church's efforts to solve the crisis.... But the papers did not explore how exactly the creation of such an annual event of the church, which was this year hijacked by the government, would tackle the deteriorating situation, largely blamed on bad governance."

**Harare, capitol of Zimbabwe**



## Church

# Erosion at the font: stage two?

Arie C. Leder  
Stage one

More than a decade ago, Henry De Moor answered the following question, proceeding from five congregations within the CRC: "May our churches offer parents of newborn children the option of dedicating them to the Lord?" None of the questioners supported believers' baptism. They held to the tradition explained in the Heidelberg Catechism that teaches that infants, too, should be baptized. The questioners were interested in the option of dedication rather than baptizing. Why be so exclusivistic?

At the time of his writing (*Calvin Theological Journal* 29 [1994]:168-180) De Moor reported that of the five congregations "one now offers the option and has for some time, another is soon to follow. A third has not introduced dedication as a ceremony but does tolerate membership of those who do not embrace the baptism of infants. A fourth has consciously stopped disciplinary procedures still dictated by our tradition for those who refuse the baptism of their newborn children. And the fifth is deliberately admitting those not committed to the practice to communicant membership with only two restrictions: Such members will be ineligible for office and may not serve in a teaching capacity until they have a change of heart. The compromise was even sanctioned by one of our classes" (170; Classis Central California).

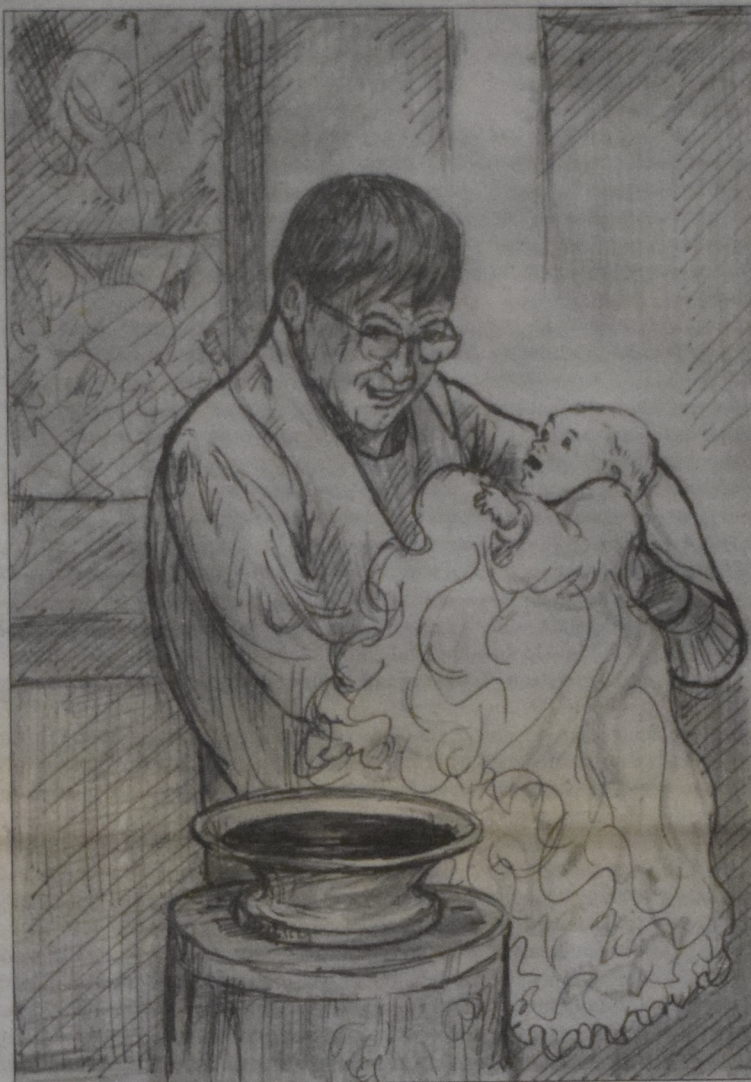
De Moor's analysis offers four reasons why this development has taken place. Then he writes, "Truth is, our soil is losing its Calvinist cohesion from within. As William Willimon reminds us, even 'supporters of infant baptism' have somehow come to focus 'upon the recipient of the sacrament rather than upon the chief actor in the sacrament,' 'upon the rights, disposition, choices, feelings, and the future of the recipient of baptism rather than upon God or God's church.' If faith speaks louder than grace, a ceremony of dedication will clearly suffice — not merely as an option but soon, sooner than we think, a substitute in all our churches." (174)

## What happened in those five churches?

How many more have become inclusivistic? And, as De Moor points out, this is not just a matter about which we may disagree, such as women in office, which Synod declared not to be a creedal matter (170), and thus in some sense adiaphora, a matter indifferent. Infant baptism is solidly anchored in the creedal traditions of the Church. "What is at stake here," writes De Moor, "is our confessional integrity, our signatures under the Form of Subscription, our identity as a Reformed community within the larger body of Christ." (171)

## Stage Two?

Wherever individual churches may stand on this matter, there are some practices surrounding the sacrament of



infant baptism that will further weaken our commitment to the sacrament as an experience of God's grace and not of personal faith.

The first practice is that of placing the child to be baptized in the arms of the minister. This minister then proceeds to hold the child in one arm and baptize with the other. A variation of this theme is to place the child in the arms of the district elder after the baptism. This elder then walks around the worship area, through the congregation. Both forms of the practice mean to portray the reception of the child into the church, the particular office-bearers being the representatives thereof. While elders and ministers do represent the authority of Christ in and for the congregation, they are not to do so ritually.

In both baptism and the Lord's Supper the minister is the ritual specialist who administers the elements which themselves speak about union with Christ. Baptism itself is the ritual instrument by which the baptized join the church. Placing the infant in the hands of the minister is not only redundant to the baptism, it undermines the meaning which baptism itself proclaims. Moving the symbolic reception in the church from baptism to the ritual specialist is not unlike moving the focus from grace of God to the faith of the recipient.

Another practice that undermines the meaning of baptism is that of having the extended family surround the infant and family, after the baptism has taken place. Of course, the child is born into an extended family. Having the family up front plays to current felt needs such as togetherness, giving people more choice, doing something different. But, emphasis on the family at baptism is the wrong thing to do. Sacraments belong to the church, not the family. Not any family, never mind the extended family. In this the Reformation distinguished itself from practices still observed in the Roman Catholic Church: the child is baptized by the priest in the presence of the family, extended or not, and friends. Baptism does not take place in the presence of the congregation as part of its worship.

At the time of baptism, focus on the family should be minimal; the focus is on God, on being incorporated into the body of Christ. That's what the sacrament means. This horizontalizing of baptism will also contribute to the diversification of doctrine, of which the option of baptism or dedication is but the camel's nose.

The last example of the resymbolization of baptism is the rose. It is the custom of some churches to place a rose at the front of the church, sometimes very close to the baptismal font. When I asked what it meant, on one occasion, I was told that the rose began to appear at baptisms in order to be supporting of the Right to Life Movement. In one church I witnessed the presentation of this rose to the mother of the child. What was the meaning of the rose: by it you may remember the baptism of your child, she was told. How charming! What a way to create good feelings! What a way to subordinate baptism to a rose!

## Now what?

At the end of his article De Moor quotes Willimon again:

"In a fundamental sense, baptism is dedication. But it is not 'dedication' in the way people often apply that phrase to baptism. At baptism, parents do not so much dedicate their children to God, rather, the parents acknowledge that God has done something for their children. When children are baptized, the parents and the church are dedicated! We are dedicated as instruments of God's love and grace so that these beloved children might 'grow in grace.'"

## Forgiveness

*"Forgiving does not erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope for our future."*

*"When we forgive evil we do not excuse it, we do not tolerate it, we do not smother it. We look the evil full in the face, call it what it is, let its horror shock and stun and enrage us, and only then do we forgive it."*

Lewis B. Smedes

## Life moments

## The apple core and the toilet

Tom Purcell

I don't know what I was thinking. Nonetheless, in 1974, I flushed an apple core down the toilet, an action I would come to regret.

As it went, my father the Big Guy had remodeled our basement into a family room. He installed the inexpensive pine paneling common to the times. He also built a small bathroom, which would be the bane of his existence.

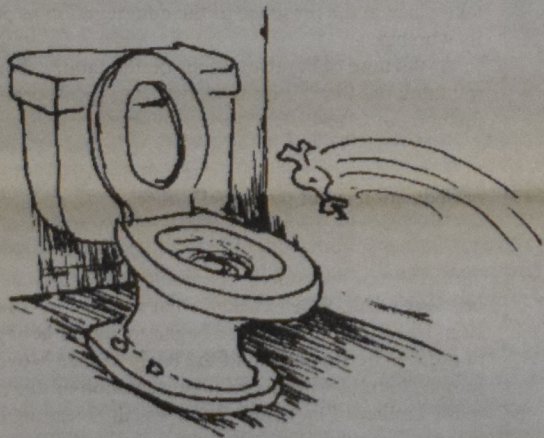
The Big Guy, always looking to save a buck – he had six kids to feed, after all – bought the cheapest toilet he could find. It never did work right. He spent much of his spare time unplugging it.

Armed with this knowledge, then, it is remarkable I did what I did.

One Sunday morning, after chomping on a large B.C. MacIntosh, I lay on the family room couch, too lazy to go upstairs to the kitchen to dispose of it. (The Big Guy warned against throwing apple cores in the basement garbage can, as they would draw ants.)

About then I noticed, some 12 feet away, that the toilet lid was up. In a moment of insanity, I aimed the core at the toilet and flicked my wrist. The core floated majestically in the air, a perfect trajectory, and landed in the center of the bowl with a satisfying “kir-plunk!”

I later flushed it and never gave it another thought.



Six months later, another clogging was reported. As fate would have it, this happened on a Sunday morning. I lay on the couch, holding another MacIntosh apple. I watched television, while the Big Guy fought to free the plug.

But nothing would free it. The plunger failed, but not before the Big Guy was soaking wet. Two jars of Drano had no effect. Even the plumber's snake, which the Big Guy always borrowed from the Krieger's when all other measures failed, was unable to dislodge the blockage.

In a fit of rage, the Big Guy unbolted the toilet from the floor. In one mighty heave, he lifted it off its mount and set it in front of the television. My mother was there by now, desperately trying to calm him. I walked over for a closer look, horrified by what I was about to witness.

The Big Guy knelt before a black hole in the floor. Despite mother's protestations, he reached his mighty paw inside it, then his forearm, then his biceps. His head was now pressed against the damp floor, the veins in his temples ready to explode.

His eyes lit up. He had something. He carefully removed his biceps, then his forearm, then his paw. He was on his knees now staring at his clenched fist. He unpeeled his fingers slowly. In the center of his palm was a black, rotten apple core.

I could go into detail about the Big Guy's incredible reaction – how he ran through the house shouting, “Who in blazes flushed an apple core down the toilet?” I could describe the shock and horror he felt when he discovered that I, his 11-year-old son and only hope in carrying on the family name, was the imbecile who did it.

But I won't. I will tell you I was paralyzed with fear that day, a

## Awakening

## Intangible Things

Heidi VanderSlikke



I want to see the sunrise this morning. Waking up at 5:00 a.m. is nothing new – menopausal sleep patterns being what they are. Actually getting out of bed at that hour is what takes effort. But I need to see the sun come up today. So I shuffle over to the closet and pull out my warmest, fleeciest robe. As quietly as I can, I close the bedroom door behind me, hoping I haven't already disturbed my sleeping husband.

In the kitchen I set up the coffeemaker, but I've no time to stand around and wait. I grab a pair of slippers and an afghan and step out onto the front porch. The cool morning air seeps through my robe. I settle myself into a clammy patio chair, making sure I'm facing east, and huddle under the blanket. The world looks like the backdrop in a high school drama production – hand painted in shades of grey. Even the lush greens of early summer are subdued in the dim pre-dawn. Dew lies thick on the soybeans in the front field. The red maples stand silhouetted against a slate sky. A few charcoal clouds here and there break the dull expanse.

I can't believe the amount of traffic passing by on the highway. Where are they going this early? Do they sense the holiness of this moment? Or are they already caught up in the hustle and bustle of the day? No matter. I filter out the traffic noise to focus on the robin's song. His lonely, persistent voice calls the other birds to wake up and join him. Somewhere a dog barks. A rooster crows in the neighbor's yard. And again.

Daybreak was my father's favorite time of day. I think now about him – his ruddy complexion and big, blacksmith's hands. I remember his grey/blue eyes, the color of steel, but tempered with gentleness. I search my mind for his voice – the way he said my name; the sound of his rich, deep singing when he shaved; how he always whistled when he worked in the garden.

I recall summers when I was a kid, the days we spent on the beach at Lake Erie; how he used to take me for a drive after a summer thunderstorm to breathe in the freshness of the world washed clean; the stories of his childhood he would tell me as we walked for miles along the railroad tracks.

Now here I sit, waiting for the sunrise. Exactly

thirty years ago today he died, around five in the morning, just as the robin's song ended the night.

My eyes are fixed on the horizon. I'm shivering. I hear Jack in the kitchen, probably pouring himself a coffee. Maybe I should go inside. But I haven't seen what I came for yet. I take a deep breath and smell hay lying in a field somewhere. The daylight grows stronger. The other birds are awake. I hear finches and sparrows en masse. The mourning doves coo. The killdeer twitters as she hops across the lawn. It's a divinely appointed choir, assigned to greet the new day.

As the landscape brightens I notice the mist over the fields. It's been there all along I suppose, but only now do I see it. Lacy fingers swirl and stretch, magically wrapping themselves around the tree trunks. The stronger the light grows, the more visible the mist, until it looks like a brooding lake of silent waves.

The birds quiet down all at once. Are they awaiting some important arrival? There it is, at last – a gleaming sliver on the edge of the world. Slowly, insistently it makes its way upward. I stare at it, feeling the golden rays on my face. Light splashes the scenery around me and brings it to life. Finally the sun is too bright for me to look at directly. I close my eyes and commit the whole image to memory. I wonder what it would look like to eyes not impeded by sin. Someday I'll know.

I wanted to watch the sunrise today as a memorial to my dad, to pay tribute to his influence and impact on my life, to acknowledge the ache of having lost him a lifetime ago. More than that, I needed to see it, as a visible reminder of my heavenly Father's presence and redemptive power. It's a time to commemorate how he called me out of darkness and into his marvelous light, exposing things I wasn't even aware of, giving me strength to steady my gaze on the eastern sky and wait for him, no matter how cold or grey this world is.

Heidi VanderSlikke lives in  
Harriston, Ont. Her email:  
hmvanderslikke@hotmail.com



fear born out of respect. The Big Guy loved me and wanted the best for me, I know now. He wanted me to master basic virtues – certainly to master common sense – and I'd failed him.

At the time, it would have been great if he were a father like the hapless idiots portrayed on television these days. But I'm glad he was a man. Unlike too

many fathers today, he was firm and strong and unafraid to confront me and discipline me in the unpleasant challenge of preparing me for life.

The hard feelings the apple core incident caused have long been forgotten. Still, every Father's Day, as we reminisce, the Big Guy asks me why I did it.

The truth is I still don't know.

## India

# India's challenge: to spread its prosperity

Scott Baldauf

**HYDERABAD, INDIA** — In a giant project called the "Golden Quadrilateral," India is building a state-of-the-art interstate highway system. Yet truckers who ply those roads must pay import duties from one state to another — almost as if their rigs were entering another country. (See story p. 19)

India has had nearly 60 years free of famine, growing enough food for its 1.1 billion people. Yet nearly 40 percent of its vegetables rot in warehouses before reaching market. The country has a space program — yet 30 percent of the population lives on less than \$1 a day; 78 percent on less than \$2.

Will the real India stand up?

Much has been written about the incredible strides India has taken since 1991, when it opened up its markets to foreign investors and slashed regulations. With 6 percent to 8 percent growth rates over the past decade, India has become a hot spot for investors, a dynamo in the outsourcing and high-tech industries, and a competitor for headlines with that other emerging economic power, China.

Yet, while India has changed dramatically — with a rising consumer economy attracting everyone from Dell to Honda to Starbucks — a growing number of foreign diplomats, Indian academics, and businesses warn that the booming growth will fizzle unless India acts soon to spread the benefits to a wider population and boost investment in roads and airports, electricity and water, and basic education.

"Despite the hype about India's emergence as a global power, I fret for India," says Sumit Ganguly, director of the India Studies Department at Indiana University in Bloomington. Aside from problems such as illiteracy, malnutrition, and lack of adequate housing, Dr. Ganguly says, India suffers from major bottlenecks in its economy, including lack of electricity, inadequate airports and seaports, and insufficient roads. "Unless India can tackle these three bottlenecks, I cannot see how it will sustain its current levels of growth."

The question, academics like Ganguly say, is not whether India is currently prospering, but rather: How can India expand its boom beyond Bangalore?

## Hi-tech rapid growth

India's story of prosperity and growth is best seen in southern cities like Bangalore and Hyderabad, where computer companies like Infosys, Wipro, and Satyam have clocked 30 percent growth rates this year. Drive around Hyderabad's HI-TEC City, an impressive suburb of glass-and-steel office parks, and you might think you have stumbled into an Asian version of the Silicon Valley. And you would be right.

Credit flows with new, well-paid jobs Indian high-tech and service companies



—unburdened by many British-era labor laws that still hold back India's manufacturing businesses — have turned a sluggish economy into a regional dynamo, creating tens of thousands of new jobs, including well-paid jobs in call centers.

Indian banks that once required detailed explanations for every expenditure and forbade any Indian to withdraw more than \$500 in foreign currency before traveling abroad now give out loans for housing, cars, and business ventures, all at low interest rates. Middle-class consumption has increased, a sign of hope for foreign investors who have plumped \$8 billion into the Indian economy in 2005, and are expected to invest an additional \$12 billion this year. (China's foreign direct investment intake was \$60 billion last year.)

And other trends are moving in India's favor. Its population is young. The government projects that by 2026, a full 64 percent of the population will be of working age. For these workers, IT isn't the only opportunity: Manufacturing grew by 9 percent last year. Tata Steel is now among the world's lowest-cost producers. Over the past five years, India's chemical industry has outpaced global growth in that sector by 500 percent, according to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. India's stock market index, Sensex, has doubled in the past two years, spawning day traders.

## Educated returning

New horizons here are bringing India's diaspora back. Take Paulmi Patel. Eight years ago, her parents left their home state of Gujarat for New Zealand to seek greater opportunities. Now, Ms. Patel is back, hoping to get a foothold in the booming field of computer technology.

"India is a very easy opportunity now," says Patel, a one-year foreign intern at Hyderabad's largest computer company, Satyam Computer Services, Ltd. "New Zealand is very small, and it has very limited job opportunities for people fresh

out of university. It's easier to grow in India now."

"India is the next country, next to China, which will be part of the global picture," agrees Francisque Singol, another intern at Satyam, who moved back from France.

But while it is increasingly common to find Indian returnees like Patel and Mr. Singol, and foreign businessmen and women taking jobs in Indian firms, broader statistics tell a much more sobering picture of the disparities, and the slow rate at which benefits of liberalization are circulating.

## Eighty percent earn less than \$2/day

Statistics from India's most recent census in 2001 show that just over 300 million Indians earn a salary of any sort, in positions from cleaning staff to clerks to CEOs. The rest, some 800 million Indians, have either part-time jobs or no jobs at all. As a result, while the top 5 percent of the population earns more than \$8,700, 30 percent of the population lives on less than \$1 a day, and 78 percent lives on less than \$2 a day. There's a high-tech divide: Only 16 out of 1,000 Indians use the Internet, compared with 57 Internet users in Asia and 96 worldwide, respectively. And a low-tech divide: only 40 percent of Indians in rural areas use soap to wash their hands and cooking utensils — a problem the company is tackling with a \$5 million education program.

"Both from neglect and [due to] the hurdles created, there has been a complete failure of the state to release the productive potential of the people," says Jayaprakash Narayan, director of Lok Satta, an institute in Hyderabad that pushes for good governance.

India should be proud of its democracy, but not of its government, says Mr. Narayan, himself a former top Indian bureaucrat who left the government to set up Lok Satta. "But making government work is tougher

than just giving 100 rupees to the poor. That requires that the government make outcomes their focus."

Success has allowed an increasing number of Indian companies to think beyond mere profits toward the development of the surrounding community, particularly in areas of health and education.

New tech companies like Wipro and Infosys, and old manufacturing giants like Tata and Birla invest heavily in private institutes of technology and management schools, in part to keep pace with the rising demand for top Indian talent at home.

A more innovative generation of companies like Satyam has begun to create outreach programs in Hyderabad's slums, as well as job centers and vocational-training programs in rural areas in the state of Andhra Pradesh, where Satyam is based.

## Boom began with government shift

That disparities continue to exist 15 years after the reform of India's economy by Rajiv Gandhi and his team of technocrats — including current Prime Minister Manmohan Singh — should come as no surprise. Faced with the imminent collapse of India's socialist, state-planned economy, Mr. Gandhi's team stripped away protectionist tariffs that shielded Indian manufacturers from foreign competition. They also removed the much hated "license Raj" that required a license for every single activity by private business. Perhaps most important, Gandhi's tech-savvy team encouraged a sector of the economy that could boom quickly without much government direction and that took advantage of India's talent in science and technology. The computer boom began.

Friendly critics of the Singh government, including Ganguly, Narayan, and others, say

*Continued bottom p. 13*



## India

# Soft spot in India's boom: the farming population

Scott Baldauf

JALLIKAKINADA, INDIA – Sitting behind a computer, Sunita Kumari is collecting data from the pension program of a state agency. It's the type of business-process work that international firms are tripping over themselves to outsource to India's high-tech hubs of Hyderabad and Bangalore. But Ms. Kumari is far from either city, or any city for that matter.

She and her co-workers live in Jallikakinada, a village in the state of Andhra Pradesh where the soil is black, banana plantations and rice paddies are always green, and fish ponds are packed with prawns. But the lush surroundings do not translate to riches for the locals, farmers who eke out little more than a dollar a day. As in most parts of India's rural countryside, well-paying jobs are scarce.

To change that, one of the top outsourcing firms from Hyderabad, Satyam Computer Services, has set up a Gram IT center in Jallikakinada. Local high school students and college graduates can land well-paying jobs once found only in cities. Kumari, for instance, earns 2,500 rupees (\$55) per month, but since she lives at home with her parents, she says the salary is almost all profit.

"My dream is to continue in this work," she says. In the past, educated people in her village had to move to cities to find jobs, and much of their salaries would be lost in the higher cost of housing and food. Now, she says, "we can make it work here, too."

## Neglected countryside

Stories like Kumari's are still by far the exception to the rule of India's long neglect of its rural countryside. Since frustrated farmers tipped the 2004 national elections and a rural Maoist insurgency spread across the heartland, India's new government has offered some short-term solutions. But Indian analysts say that if the country wishes to sustain its economic boom, it must broaden the benefits of economic reform to the 60 percent of its citizens – and a quarter of the

economy – linked to agriculture.

"India cannot sustain an 8 percent growth rate if [a quarter of] the economy is only growing at 1.2 percent," says Rajiv Kumar, director of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, a think tank in New Delhi. "There's no way that manufacturing or high tech can pull up the rest" of the economy.

More than 110 million Indians are farmers, and an estimated 500 million more make a living primarily off the agricultural sector as laborers, seed and fertilizer traders, tractor mechanics, and so on.

The Indian high-tech industry, by contrast, employs only 1.2 million people, and no matter how fast it grows, the new information economy cannot hope to employ the majority of the country's people – especially the millions who are uneducated.

Instead, analysts say, solutions must be found for the problems facing average farmers like Pilli Arjaya in Bhimavaram. In a good year, Mr. Arjaya may earn a net income of 18,000 rupees (\$390) from the two acres he leases, barely enough to take care of the 12 members of his family. But the weather hasn't been good this year, so he has taken out a \$200 loan at 36 percent interest.

He'll get by, he says, though it will take years to pay off the debt. For Arjaya, stories of India's emergence as an economic power seem a distant reality: "In coming years, we expect we will develop too. We are better off than our ancestors were. But not much."

## Green Revolution a proud moment

India's agricultural sector hasn't always been neglected. The Green Revolution of the 1960s and '70s introduced new seeds that boosted yields and stopped famine.

But it didn't improve livelihoods, and the attention eventually shifted to "new economy" centers that are growing by leaps and bounds. In the high-tech city of Hyderabad, nicknamed Cyberabad, exports in software and hardware grew by 64 percent between 2004 and 2005. By contrast, the

control engineer. He says he chose Satyam partly because of the value it places on corporate responsibility.

"All people have the capability to show talents, and India has potential, but there are certain flaws – in family, in financial background – that hold people back," says Mr. Pobbathi, who donates his time to Satyam-funded charitable groups that work in Hyderabad's slums. "If you touch one person in a slum, then it will spread like fire in a jungle," he says. "If you help a young person, aged 13 to 35, to improve their life, and get education or just clean drinking water, then you can make a difference. If not, then they are lost."

Scott Baldauf is a writer for The Christian Science Monitor



1.2 percent growth rate of the agricultural sector has fallen from 3 percent in the Green Revolution days.

Farmers are among India's poorest citizens. According to the US Agency for International Development, 80 percent of Indian farms are less than 3.5 acres; 62 percent are less than one acre. More than half of India's citizens live on less than a dollar a day.

The sluggish growth and grinding poverty is partly due to the way the government insulates farming from market forces

## Forty percent of produce rots

Under current Indian law, farmers cannot sell their produce directly to the market. Instead, they must first sell to registered middlemen, who then hold onto the produce until they get the best price. In this system, nearly 40 percent of all fruits and vegetables rot in unrefrigerated government warehouses before they can reach market, according to official government estimates.

The system was designed to prevent shortages and famine – and has largely succeeded in doing so. The downside, however, is that by stockpiling food at home, and subsidizing food prices for consumers, farmers have seen their profits take a dive.

## Food processing could bring new jobs

New industries that take advantage of rural resources need to be developed, experts say. One promising industry, food processing, has brought a trickle of new foreign and local investment and is offering India's farmers hope.

"You can't expect a miracle, you have to evolve it, slowly," says Richard Saldanha, who, as a former corporate executive with the food manufacturing company Hindustan Lever, attempted to bring food processing into rural areas. He is now a top marketing executive with the *Times* of India. "We think that if you go to a village, and put huge infrastructure in there, this will make a difference. But unless they have ownership, that won't capture the spirit and passion of the

people. They'll just get alienated by it."

In the western state of Gujarat, Canadian potato-chip-maker McCain's is soon set to announce a new potato-chip factory, buying specially grown potatoes from hundreds of Indian farmers on contract.

The Pepsi-Cola company has recently started a similar contract-farming arrangement with sugar farmers in Punjab.

## Training programs, technology offer uplift

On top of for-profit enterprises, some Indian companies are funding development projects out of a sense of social responsibility. In Jinnuru village, a low-lying area of flooded rice paddies and coconut palms, the Byrraju Foundation, has ventured into more traditional areas of agricultural extension that would normally have been handled by the state government.

The foundation is sending field experts out with cameras that allow farmers to photograph areas where pests or disease are taking a toll. The trainers in the field show the farmers how to send the photos to Byrraju-selected agricultural experts via the Internet. Through this system, Byrraju has been able to deliver week-by-week advice for farmers on how to increase their yields.

The results this spring have been extraordinary. In Jinnuru, a test site, farmers under the program have been able to increase their yields by 20 percent, from 35 to 40 bags of unhulled rice per acre up to 52 bags, says V. Pullam Raju, an agricultural expert with the Byrraju Foundation.

"This is the first effort of its kind for rice paddy," says Mr. Raju, who is not related to the Satyam founder. "Expert advice is coming to the small farmer using the latest technology. Many farmers are saving expenses, by using only as much pesticide as they need, and are increasing their yields."

But in Jinnuru village, it is clear that such positive stories are still highly unusual, and that there is much work to be done.

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## India's challenge...continued from p. 12

that India's leaders need to now focus on how to broaden the Indian boom, and make it sustainable.

"Money is not the issue, the question is how do you put more accountability and local control into how that money is spent," says Narayan. "The whole notion that India is just 5 percent of its population (the elite), and the rest are a problem, that is extremely dangerous. Sadly, we have an elite that doesn't understand it is in their enlightened interest to see the rest of the country prosper as well as they have."

There are some notable exceptions of course. At Satyam, 10 percent of the company's employees devote 10 percent of their work time to charitable projects. Typical is Gangadhar Pobbathi, a quality-

## Ecclesiastes

## The radical democracy of death



Allegory of Death by Juan de Valdez leal

*This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all.*

Ecclesiastes 9:3a

A.A. van Ruler

Here the Preacher seems determined to penetrate to the very heart of wisdom. He appears to be convinced that he has at last discovered the worst thing under the sun, namely, that all suffer the same destiny or fate. And that destiny is, of course, death.

Why is death so bad? The only answer can be because death is death. Life is good. In fact, it is the only good. Life is what it is all about. So death is the worst thing of all. It puts an end to life. With death, it is all over. Everything seems to be wiped out.

This isn't true, of course. Death can do life in, but it can't undo life. The fact that I will die may be as true as the stars overhead, but it cannot erase the fact that I exist here and now and that I will have been here to all eternity. The power of death does not stretch that far. It cannot devour life completely.

But this does not diminish the evil of death. It remains the end of life, and life is good. That is one thing the Preacher is sure of. He returns to this theme later.

But this is not the point he wants to make here. He has something else in mind. He focuses on the fact that each and every one will suffer the same destiny: death comes to everyone without exception. It is not just the unrighteous, the wicked and the sinners who die. Who could object to that? That could simply mean that there is a final judgment, that evil will be punished and that

the earth will be purified of all unrighteousness. But death does not stop there, for the righteous, the good also die. All share the same destiny.

On careful reflection, this is outrageous. Here we have someone who is leading a full life, someone with a sublime mind, someone who has a great deal to contribute to science and to social progress. But he gets killed in an automobile accident. His precious brains are spilled onto the pavement, into the dust. Suddenly this sublime mind is no more. This can happen not only to the learned, but also to the artistic and even to the virtuous. Isn't it outrageous that even the good must die? No matter how much we need such people, they are snatched from us by death.

This causes many of us great suffering. But it outrages not only the human heart but also the mind. For if everything passes away like this, the question inevitably arises, then what good are learning, art and goodness? None of them endure anyhow. They are all taken away.

It is true that it doesn't all disappear completely. This is the great mystery of society, tradition and the historical process: that future generations profit from the achievements of the preceding generation. In the words of one of the church fathers, we have eternal life in our reproductive organs.

We must not be contemptuous of such thoughts. They are not just superficial band-aids. The individual must, it would seem, find the meaning of existence in social life

and in the historical process. The Bible too points us in this direction.

Yet, the life of the individual is never entirely subsumed in the life of society. The individual in his solitary existence, as a particular person, also has standing before God's face. If this is so, the riddle of death returns in all its perplexity. It remains, as Paul says, an enemy. And the Preacher keeps examining the various facets of this enmity. The facet he examines here is death's relentlessness: it has no respect for anything. Death is the fate that awaits all, the good and the wicked alike.

There's a grim humor in that. In two respects. First, in the fact that death is so formidably democratic. It is no respecter of persons. Rich and poor, old and young, wise and foolish, good and bad, pious and ungodly — all are alike to death. Sometimes it seems as if death is the only truly democratic reality in the world. Only Jesus excepted, for he too comes for all without distinction. However, he is not as relentless. Christ does not force himself upon us and overwhelm us. We must desire him.

The second way that death poses a grim humor is this: that it is completely future and yet completely certain. It is the only thing in the future that is certain. Everything else is uncertain for us: as the Preacher says in verse one, no one knows what awaits him. All we know is that death awaits us.

These are all thoughts that pass through the Preacher's mind, but he does not dwell on them. What he dwells on is the fact that death respects nothing. This seems to make all distinctions among people meaningless, including the difference between the good and the wicked. If death levels everyone, is there really a difference between good and evil?

Or does the difference have any meaning? And in this connection, do all the efforts of mankind, all his toil under the sun, possess any meaning? This is the question that gnaws at the Preacher: is all this labor futile?

When we look death in the face, aren't we compelled to answer yes? This is why the fact that all suffer the same destiny strikes the Preacher as the greatest evil under the sun.

However, in all this we must not forget one thing: the Preacher sees the human situation in the light of this thought: "that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands" (9:1). They do not have their destiny in their own hands. Not even their righteousness and wisdom can achieve this. They remain in God's hands. He deals with them according to his own sovereign good will. And our eyes cannot penetrate there.

This fact becomes clear to us in death. Birth is somewhat different. Here too we are not in our own hands, but our parents still play a role. They still hold us in their hands. But at death, there is no one. Then we are entirely in God's hands. Christ was alright with that: "Into your hands I commit my spirit," he said.

This is something we must learn from him.

## Impact

Rod Hugen

I think one of our deepest longings is to have impact on our world. Impact that advances the kingdom of God. Positive impact. Along with the longing to be loved, I think having impact is one of our greatest longings.

I have often employed sinful strategies to achieve the goal of having impact. I brag or point at my 'accomplishments' and hope that people will notice. I suspect I am not alone in this. And I suspect that it is not sinful to have the longing. Longings are part of our brokenness, our separation from God.

One of the reason we write on Voices is to be able to convince others that our ideas are good or better than others' ideas and one of the reasons we look in or lurk is to come to grips with what we think about certain things so that we will not appear stupid or ill-informed. I also suspect that we categorize people into two major groups — those who impact us and those we impact. It is hard for us to see a lot of crossover between the two groups.

And so it was with Ron Price. He had tremendous impact on my life. He was my accounting prof back in my college days. I showed up in school after having dropped out for a few years and I was terrified to be back in the classroom. I sat in the back row of Accounting 101. A raging lunatic strolled around the lectern up front, yelling at us, and telling us that there were way too many students in his classroom and that if we weren't going to become CPA's we should just get the hell out. After a few class periods Mr. Price had whittled the class down to about 20 students and he proceeded to teach us a lot about accounting and even more about life.

He offered a lot of wisdom and freely gave his advice to any who sought it. Later when I needed a good CPA to help turn around the company I worked for, I turned to Price, Kong and Company. We worked closely together in my former life as a chief financial officer for Charlie C. Jones, Inc. Once when I was being threatened for having done something that others were angry about, Ron wrote a letter on my behalf, explaining that the action taken was warranted and that he would defend me as having done what was right and ethical even if it cost him the company contract. I still have that amazing letter.

I worked with Ron after I left that company and we remained friends. One day I was having breakfast with him and he suddenly pushed paper aside and said, "You are not cut out for this. Your heart isn't in it."

I was deeply offended and asked him what he thought I should do if it wasn't accounting and financial stuff since I'd been doing that since age 12. He grinned and said, "I'm not much of a spiritual guy, but I have always thought of you as a pastor." He went on to explain that I was the most spiritual guy he had ever met and that he was impressed that I made decisions based

## Christian living

Impact...continued from p. 14



at what remained of that crazy prof I once knew. A bag of bones, but eyes that lit up when he saw me. Other people were visiting and we swapped lies and stories and remem-

on my belief in God.

I remember being stunned by that and since it was another in a long line of 'calls' from God, I spent restless nights trying to figure out what God was saying to me. Later when I preached my first sermon and became a church planter/pastor, Ron's words echoed in my ears.

Over the years we have kept in contact. An occasional breakfast or coffee. A phone call now and then. An annual Christmas letter with a paragraph or two. Moving to Tucson made the visits more infrequent and it had been a year and half since I had talked to him.

I was driving down Osborn Road a few weeks ago and saw his company sign. I felt compelled to pull in and walked into their plush offices wearing jeans, t-shirt, and a couple day's growth of beard. The guy at the desk gave me the beady eye when I asked if Mr. Price was in.

He asked if I had an appointment and then said that Mr. Price was retired and was at home and rather ill. I asked to speak to Mr. Kong and he suggested that Mr. Kong was out for the day.

I asked if any of the old timers were around and after giving me the eye again, he called Sam up front. Sam gave me a hug and told me that Ron was at home dying of pancreatic cancer. He told me to go over to the house and see him.

I was hesitant and talked about last days being family time that I did not wish to intrude on. Sam insisted that Ron would want to say goodbye to me, that I had a huge impact on his life. I laughed and said, "You have that backwards. Ron impacted my life." Sam picked up the phone and called Ron's house and told Ron's grandson that I was on my way over.

When I arrived I was shocked

branches for a while and then it was time for me to leave. I told him how much he had impacted my life. I thanked him for his wisdom and kindness and for always defending me. I thanked him for encouraging me to become what I love. To pursue my heart and overcome my fear and become what most people had said I could not be.

When we hugged goodbye and he hung on to me for a long time. He said through choking tears, "You changed my life. I found God because of you and because of your passion for him. You taught me so much about living a Godly life. I am a follower of Jesus now and even though I will be dead in a few days or weeks, I will see you on the other side."

I sat in the car and wept. Sam called to see if I had gone. He said he wants to talk to me about what Ron and I have.

Last Friday, the family asked me to speak a eulogy at the memorial service. I got to tell the hundreds gathered about how an accounting prof invited me out of accounting and into pastoring. I got to tell about all the wonderful ways he impacted my life. And I got to hear beautiful stories of how he impacted so many students and colleagues. I got to hear his desire that the gospel be clearly presented at his memorial service. The pastor did a great job of doing that.

In my pocket I have a bunch of business cards. Including Sam's. Cards from people who saw Ron change. Cards from lawyers and accountants and business owners. Cards of people who would like to talk to me about what it takes to walk away from the only thing you know and to follow God. People who 'knew' my story, because Ron had told it so many times.

One guy said, "It is good to meet you. Ron must have told

## On most farms, most fuel is consumed by... No, not tractors

Maynard van der Galien

In the days when fuel prices were cheap, farmers often worked up their soil as if they were planting a flowerbed. Now more and more farmers are using a no-till drill, thus saving labor and fuel.

Talk about savings! A neighbor of mine no-tilled soybeans into a field of corn stalks. The corn was combined for grain last November – just the cobs were taken off. The clay soil was hard this spring. The soybeans went in over the dry corn stalk in late May and they are nicely up in rows as I write this a month later. We've had perfect weather for growth. The corn stalks are starting to disintegrate. By the time the soybeans are ready to be harvested (October or November) the corn stalks are supposed to be gone.

And I'm sure those farmers who still use a seed drill don't go over a field with a disk or cultivator anymore than they absolutely have to.

With a barrel of oil trading at a near record price, and natural gas prices at least double from a year ago, farmers across Canada are feeling the effects. Rising oil costs boost farm fuel prices, and skyrocketing natural gas values have caused price hikes in essential fertilizer products.

How can producers cope? The Royal Bank's March *Agriculture Business Review* publication has some good advice for farmers looking for answers.

Gary Pike runs Pike Management Group, a farm management and marketing firm based in Lethbridge, Alta; serving clients across Western Canada. Pike notes that, on paper, it's easy enough to see where quick energy savings could be made: cut back on fertilizer and reduce farm equipment fuel consumption.

Pike says you could reduce energy use, but hurt the farm's profitability even more. He suggests to start by understanding where your energy-related dollars are going, directly or indirectly, then develop a number of different strategies. In the article he outlines three areas where energy savings could be possible.

### Fuel for farm equipment

Big equipment requires large amounts of fuel, making a tractor or combine the perfect place to look for savings. Right? Not so fast, says Pike. First calculate where your fuel dollars are actually being spent. "On most farms, the biggest share of fuel is spent on pickup trucks," he says. "Your tractor

might consume 12 gallons per hour, but you only use it for 300 hours each year. Compare that to the farm pickup truck that runs anywhere from 50,000 to 100,000 kilometres per year."

Reducing the use of the pickup could pay bigger dividends than changing usage of the farm's field equipment.

### Fertilizer

Since natural gas is a major component of fertilizer manufacturing, fertilizer prices often move in step with gas prices. Still, haphazardly cutting back on fertilizer could cost far more in lost revenue than it saves through lower expenses. Pike strongly advises against an across the board fertilizer cutback. Instead, consider a targeted reduction.

"If you must trim fertilizer use, don't assess the farm as a whole," he says. "Determine which crops in your area have the highest and lowest response to added fertilizer. Farmers can add more legumes to the crop mix when fertilizer prices are high. If you did this, what would the impact on your nitrogen needs be in the initial year, and in the following year?"

### Farm buildings

Apart from ensuring that insulation is adequate, consider the risks and rewards of upgrading the heating system in your farm buildings. Coal-fired boilers and straw-fired boilers have become more popular in recent years, and can take the edge off high heating costs.

Says Pike: "You shouldn't make big changes without considering the numbers objectively. Treat each piece of equipment and each crop differently, so you can understand which fuel or input purchases return the most profit, and which could be reduced. That will take some time, so start by establishing a baseline today."

Farmers aren't the only ones who love their pickup trucks. After a hard week of hauling and lugging things, the "expensive" pick-up is hitched up to the camper trailer and off they go to a trailer park, plowing match, fiddling show, bluegrass, whatever... to enjoy themselves for the weekend.

Maynard van der Galien owns and operates The Old Towne Hall Restaurant and Tea Room in downtown Renfrew, Ont.



me your story a dozen times. I was discouraged and scared and wondering what the future held and Ron would tell me about a friend of his who walked away from the business world to build a church down in Tucson. He always ended it by saying, 'the guy has no money and no investments, but his

eyes are full of life and he is out changing the world."

Impact. The King of this Kingdom is very good. And he allows us to be impacted and to have impact. To him be the glory, the weight, the ultimate impact.

Rod Hugen is a church planter and evangelist for the CRC in Tucson, Arizona. He describes himself as "tribal elder and pastor" at The Village, a community of faith in Arizona, a church with a non-traditional approach to worship and fellowship.

## Perspectives

## Transcending the natural limits of human life

Albert Mohler

Frustration with the human condition has led many mortals astray. Indeed, the primal temptation that came to Adam and Eve in the garden was, in essence, to escape their own creaturely finitude and grasp after knowledge that had been forbidden them. Thus, by eating the forbidden fruit, Adam and Eve effectively redefined humanity, now "knowing the difference between good and evil."

Efforts to transcend the natural limits of human life and experience are regular features of ancient mythologies and modern literature. Strangely enough, ideas and proposals once limited to the world of science fiction are now taken seriously in some scientific circles.

If you demand evidence for that assertion, just consider the "Human Enhancement Technologies and Human Rights" conference, held May 26-28 at the Stanford Law School.

Bioethicist Wesley J. Smith, Senior Fellow at the Discovery Institute and Special Consultant for the Center for Bioethics and Culture, attended the sessions and has offered this summary analysis: "If you want to know what it feels like to wander into a Salvador Dali painting, try attending a conference of transhumanists."

Smith offers a rather comprehensive report on the conference in "The Catman Cometh – Among the Transhumanists," published in the June 26, 2006 edition of *The Weekly Standard*. As he explains, "Transhumanism is a radical movement emanating from the universities that seeks to enhance human capacities via technology. The ultimate goal is a utopian world of 'post-humans,' such as human/robot hybrids and human consciousness downloaded into computers that will live for thousands of years."

Consider some of the ideas that were floating around at the conference. Smith cites James Hughes, a professor of health policy at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut, who argues that human beings must eradicate "human racism," defined as the belief that humans should be accorded a special moral status just because they are human. Hughes is the author of *Citizen Cyborg*, a book that offers his vision of a transhumanist future. He argues that we must replace the notion of humanity with the concept of "personhood." As Smith explains, "Under personhood theory, some humans would be excluded, but all self-aware entities – whether human, post-human, machine, chimera, or robot – would qualify for the rights, privileges, and protections of citizenship."

Smith also reports that Nick Bostrom, cofounder of the World Transhumanists Association, is seeking to maintain some sense of "post-human dignity," but he also denies that this dignity can be "based on

substrata." In other words, it should not matter whether a "being" is biological, or merely mechanical.

The conference also featured an ideological array including feminists like Annalee Newitz, who called for a transhumanist future in which female biology would be fixed, allowing women "better control over female evolution." Women should not have to rely upon males for "genetic material" in the making of babies. Newitz, a contributing editor at *Wired* magazine, also argues that men should be surgically altered so that they can become biological mothers.

As Newitz states in the conference brochure, "For thousands of years, women have been subjected to a genetic engineering program known as patriarchy – from an evolutionary perspective, patriarchy is a system in which men choose mates for women, and it has affected the culture and genetic make-up of countless generations. Today many of us live in post-patriarchal societies with fairly advanced reproductive technology. Can we use this technology in the service of a feminist genetic engineering project? I argue that we can."

**Human enhancement is the goal of many**, if not all, of the participants. At times, the notion of "enhancement" takes on twisted forms. Susan Stryker, identified as "an internationally recognized independent scholar and filmmaker whose historical research and theoretical writings have helped shape the field of transgender studies," joined with Nikki Sullivan of Macquarie University in Australia to present a paper entitled "King's Body, Queen's Member: State Sovereignty, Transsexual Surgery, and Self-Demand Amputation."

As the conference program summarized their session: "We demonstrate how a discourse of bodily integrity has been deployed both for and against transsexual surgery and self-demand amputation at various historical moments and in differing social contexts. Drawing on Hobbes' theory of sovereignty in *Leviathan*, as well as Foucault's critique of centralized state authority, we argue that 'integrity' is not predicated on notions of natural, biologic, organic unity, but rather on the availability of the body as a source of biopower into the State's projects. We thus arrive at a radically antihumanist under-



*Cyborg queen, part human, part machine*

standing of political struggles that structure the occupation of one's own embodied space, and which ultimately determine whether the body is available as a resource for subjective needs as well as state functions."

Now you are a brave reader if you have attempted to unpack those last few sentences. Suffice it to say that Stryker and Sullivan are arguing that society treats human bodies as mere sources of "biopower" for the state's purposes. Using a radical cultural analysis, they then argue that persons ought to be able to demand radical surgery on their bodies, even to the point of amputating healthy limbs, so they can meet their own subjective needs and no longer serve as "biopower" for the state. Got it?

Aubrey De Grey, biogerontologist at the University of Cambridge sought to redefine the right to life. "Humanity has long demonstrated a paradoxical ambivalence concerning the extension of healthy human lifespan," he said in his catalog statement. "Modest health extension has been universally sought, whereas extreme (even indefinite) health extension has been

regarded as a snare and delusion – a dream beyond all others at first blush, but actually something we are better off without." Aubrey De Grey is not satisfied with that conclusion. Indeed, he calls for "curing aging" in order to expand the human lifespan without limit. He argues that humans "have a right to live as long as they wish to." Thus, "Once we realize this, our determination to consign human aging to history will be second only to our shame that we took so long to break out of our collective trance."

**In other words, death is an evolutionary accident** that should be eradicated by intentional intervention and biomedical advances. But, at least Aubrey De Grey was talking about humans. George Devorsky, on the other hand, argues that human beings must now biologically "uplift" non-human animals. As he explains, "As the potential for enhancement technologies migrates from the theoretical to the practical, a difficult and important decision will be imposed upon human civilization, namely the issue as to whether or not we are morally obligated to biologically enhance non-human animals and bring them along with us into advanced postbiological

existence. There will be no middle road that we can take; humanity will either have to leave animals in their current state of nature or bring as many sentient creatures along into a posthuman future. A strong case can be made that life and civilizations on Earth have already been following this general tendency and that animal uplift will be a logical and reasonable developmental stage along this continuum of progress."

So, even as the transhumanists want to transcend the limits of human existence, some also demand that the same "uplift" be extended to the animal kingdom as well. Why limit transhumanism to humans? Indeed, the other "beings" of concern at the conference were mechanical beings like robots. As Nick Bostrom, a philosopher at Oxford University, argued, "we need to expand our concept of dignity to encompass posthuman dignity as well as human dignity. If human dignity is the grounding for human rights, this move directly leads us to consider the question of posthuman rights. I will address the issue of such rights in the context of the creation of artificial minds . . .

## Perspectives

. And discuss some tentative ethical principles for defining our rights and responsibilities relative to our hypothetical future machine progeny, and their rights and responsibilities relative to their creators."

**No kidding.** These scientists, theorists, and philosophers, teaching at some of the most prestigious academic institutions in the world, were seriously considering granting recognition of human dignity to machines and robots. Even the language in the making of such proposals appears ludicrous on its face. What does it mean to speak of "hypothetical future machine progeny?" Beyond that, how can we speak of robots having "rights and responsibilities relative to their creators?" Once again, science fiction is treated as the coming reality.

Is it?

As Wesley J. Smith argues, "We shouldn't take all this too seriously, of course. Transhumanism is mostly an intellectual game, a fantasy. The technological breakthroughs necessary to create a true post-humanity will almost surely never come." So, should we worry?

"But this doesn't mean that transhumanism is benign – far from it," Smith advises. "Dismissing the intrinsic value of human life is always dangerous, and presuming to determine which human traits are desirable and which not leads to very dark places."

As Smith rightly reminds, a "new eugenics" has already arrived, with the abortion of the vast majority of babies diagnosed with Down's Syndrome and with the genetic screening of human embryos now urged upon us.

Furthermore, Smith notes that the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Commerce have called for spending billions of dollars pursuing the very technologies that the transhumanists envision. The National Institutes of Health granted \$773,000 to Case Law School in order to determine the advisability of "ethically acceptable rules" concerning the use of genetic technologies for human enhancement.

**The rise of the transhumanist movement** is just one symptom of a primal sin that has affected humanity from Adam onward. Dissatisfied with the limits of our human condition, there is the natural impulse to exceed those limitations. Thus, entire industries have been developed, intended to offer the promise of a longer life, a better life, a different life, and the eclipse of human boundaries.

Affirmation that human dignity rests upon a clear and unambiguous affirmation that we are, after all, creatures uniquely made in God's image. The very fact that we are creatures reminds us of the fact that our Creator has the right to define and to determine what it means to be human. The problem with transhumanism is not merely in the details, or even in the likelihood that many of these technologies will never see the light of day. Indeed, the real problem is that the very urge and desire to eclipse human limitations is an act of defiance grounded in profound ingratitude. At the core of transhumanism is a basic hatred of humanity. The true humanists are those who accept with gratitude the gift of true humanity.

*Dr. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., serves as president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary – the flagship school of the Southern Baptist Convention and one of the largest seminaries in the world. He has been recognized by such influential publications as Time and Christianity Today as a leader among American evangelicals. In fact, Time.com called him the "reigning intellectual of the evangelical movement in the U.S."*

## Pulling God into our agenda

*The nights and days will not pass without us taking vengeance like on Sept. 11, God permitting.*

Osama Bin Laden

*Governments have not been good to me, but God has been good to me.... If you are on the side of the right, then God can't be against you.*

Imelda Marcos

*God would sanction an investment in this particular company.*

B.C. Christian News quoting  
B.C. Security Commission's recent findings  
of alleged pressure to invest (paraphrased)

*A dramatic plea spoke of the Holy Spirit's role in the compromise they arrived at and urgently encouraged unanimous approval of it. It was a powerful introduction to their work. Watching, I almost felt that a vote against would be a vote against the work of the Holy Spirit.*

JoMae Spoelhof,

Christian Courier, July 10, 2006, reporting on  
Synod's recent vote to limit the role of women.

I just feel like packing the car, stopping the mail and locking the doors – prerequisites for going on holidays. But here I am again writing a column just before I head out of the door. This task was at the top of my "to do" list all last week. Unfortunately, I procrastinated and did all the other chores first. Now I am fighting the clock. I know why I procrastinated. Writing the column is hard work. The chores in comparison were no brainers. But the column....

There is a challenge for the month of July! In the summer we like to get away from our every day routine and experience new things. Never mind, life's inner or outer struggles. We want a break!

What then are the above quotes about? Sounds like pretty serious stuff for a summer column. At the same time, I seem to lack the energy to write it. So, I keep on procrastinating. Yet, the idea keeps bombarding my brain and I know it will not go away until I just do it! So, here it goes.

### Three a crowd?

We have all heard of the popular phrase "Two's company three is a crowd." The reality is we prefer "two is company" but we often need "three as a crowd" to function in relationships.

Ron Richardson in *Family Ties That Bind*, writes about Sue who often saw her parents arguing. Her father frequently shouted at her mother. Her mother did not stand up for herself and would cry and give in to him. Sue would feel sorry for mother and feel angry towards father. When father would storm out of the house, Sue would comfort mother.

Over time Sue became more and more angry because nothing changed between her parents. Year's later in therapy she learned about triangles. She learned a relationship between two people is inherently unstable, especially when there is high emotionality in the system causing another person to be pulled in to make it more manageable. Hence we have the triangle – father, mother and Sue.

As an example, we only have look in Genesis. Remember God looking for Adam after he had sinned? When he finally found him God asked, "Have you eaten from the

## Getting Unstuck

Arlene Van Hove

tree...?" What did Adam say? He must have felt pretty anxious when he said, "The woman you put here with me.... She gave me some fruit...." But that is not all. If we read carefully we notice the words: "the woman you put here with me." What nerve he had! He pulled in Eve as well as God!

I often wonder what God thought at this point. Still, God went on and challenged Eve, "What is this you have done?" What did Eve say? She must have been pretty anxious too when she said, "The serpent deceived me...." And so, she pulls in the serpent. Here is a great picture of two human beings well on their way to a confusing and exasperating relationship. What of course was missing was a simple, "Be responsible for yourself" admittance of "I ate."

Triangles are simply a fact of life. It is the main dynamic on TV soap operas. All the drama and frustration of these shows is created by people not saying things directly to each other. The most well-known triangle is a husband, wife and mistress. At the same time, not all triangles are unhealthy. Some are helpful and necessary. A worried husband might triangle with a physician about his wife's health. An exhausted young mother may triangle with excessive novel reading for a while to calm and sooth her nerves. And how often don't we triangle with a "time out" moment when our discussions with family members become a little too heated.

### Triangles in the church community

My concern about triangles is when God is pulled into the equation for the purpose of violence, inappropriate living, unsound business practices, discrimination and various other injustices. In the above quotes by Osama Bin Laden, Imelda Marcos, the unnamed Christian security advisor, Synod as written up by JoMae Spoelhof, God (or the Holy Spirit) plays a huge part. Pulling God into the issues gives it sincerity, acceptance and, most important, extra weight. But it also brings intuitive confusion.

Ron Richardson in *Creating a Healthier Church* writes, "Triangles come about when people cannot work toward this one-to-one closeness and they don't know what to do with their anxiety. People have the illusion that they are getting along with each other when they are in agreement about the third point of the triangle, whether it is a child, the church, the pastor, the church school curriculum, God, and so forth. This helps them to avoid their real differences with each other."

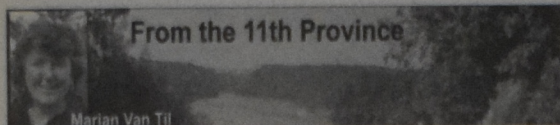
He further writes, "the story of the woman taken in adultery in John's Gospel is full of triangles. The primary one is Jesus, the Pharisees, and the woman. The Pharisees try to get Jesus to take a side so that they can trap him. Jesus steps out of the triangle with his wise response to them "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone." He directs their attention back to themselves and away from the triangular "other" focus.

When JoMae Spoelhof wrote, "I almost felt that a vote against, would be a vote against the work of the Holy Spirit," she intuitively knew something was wrong. Now we all know. The attention has to be brought back to those who made the decisions in Synod. In a democracy not all are guilty, but all are responsible.

Arlene Van Hove is a therapist and a member of the Fleetwood CRC. She can be reached at [avanhove@shaw.ca](mailto:avanhove@shaw.ca)



## Reflections



From the 11th Province

Marian Van Til

One of the sound and sturdy chorales that is part of the Lutheran tradition and can still be found in the various Lutheran hymnals has been handed down the centuries from Luther himself. The straightforward tune came from the fine collection of 1543 by Johan Klug called *Geistliche Lieder* (Spiritual Songs), but the reformer himself wrote the text. In English it says:

*Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word;  
curb those who by deceit or sword  
would wrest the Kingdom from your Son  
and bring to naught all he has done.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, your power make known,  
for you are Lord of lords alone;  
defend your holy church,  
that we may sing your praise triumphantly.*

*O Comforter of priceless worth,  
send peace and unity on earth;  
support us in our final strife  
and lead us out of death to life.*

It is significant that those who prepared the current 1987 *Psalter Hymnal* on behalf of the Christian Reformed Church recognized the need for such a text (and its fine, simple tune) in the CRC's body of hymnody and borrowed it from the Lutherans to include in the *Psalter Hymnal* for the first time.

There are riches here. First, that word "steadfast," with its implied plea that we will be constant, faithful, unwavering and firm of direction. We're really praying that God will guide our every thought and step, that our lives be submerged in his will, which his Word reveals. But this is more than personal. We're also praying that those who oppose God, through violence or deceit, be curbed: they are attempting to wrest the Kingdom away from Christ, and to negate his work. (Isn't the secular insistence – and many Christians have bought into it, too – that our religion must be a private matter, good for you or me but of no ultimate truth or consequence for anybody else, a gross form of such deceit that works against the Kingdom?)

### Jesus, with your church abide

To counteract it, we must cry from the depths of our hearts: *LORD Jesus Christ, make your power known, for you only are LORD of lords!* And then, we plead with him to defend his holy church – us, his people set apart. We ask that not only for his own sake, but so that we may sing his praise triumphantly. ("Do those who are dead rise up and praise you?" [Psalm 88: 10]; "Who praises you from the grave? [6: 5].")

Next, we address the Spirit, "Comforter of priceless worth." (That descriptor is a reminder of the magnitude of the gift we have received in having been given the

Spirit). We ask the Spirit to send peace and unity on earth. This is not the vague secular prayer of good intentions for world peace that gets uttered a lot now a days (and which is impossible apart from the presence of Christ and his Spirit). It is, rather, a reflection of Jesus's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: *Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one* (John 17:11).

To conclude, we pray for support in our "final strife," in our last struggle with death: that Christ would enfold us in his strong arms as we pass from this fallen world to the life of the world to come. Again there is also a universal implication: to the Church's struggle against Satan; a call for protection for Christ's Church in the Last Battle. (An aside here, a godly coincidence, as it were: as I did last month I am listening to Bach cantatas while I write my CC column. I didn't look at the specific content of the CD I put on a while ago. And suddenly I am hearing the third verse of this very chorale!)

It would seem to be a no-brainer that not only Lutherans and Reformed people but all Christians would pray, *need* to earnestly pray, this kind of prayer. However, the heart and mind that nurtures the inclination to pray such a prayer is no longer universal among those who call themselves Christians. The failure to feel the need to ask God to keep us steadfast in his Word stems from a failure to understand and treasure the Word of God as the self-revelation of the only LORD God, and the only means through which we can meet the Saviour before whom, one day, we and every knee shall bow.

It is not only disconcerting but truly tragic that some denominations who are ostensibly part of Christ's Body on earth suffer from that failure. They are paying a heavy price. While unfortunately there are many parts of the Lutheran world itself where this chorale is now ignored and its message un-prayed, it is the Anglican Communion that I'm thinking of right now.

### A dearth of the Word of the LORD

In the last CC issue, the editor reported key events from the recent General Convention of The Episcopal Church in the United States. In deep crisis, this church is hemorrhaging members by the thousands. Having in the past long worked as a music director in two parishes in the Anglican Church of Canada and more recently for 12 years in an Episcopal parish in western New York (each with the broader-church contacts that implies), I have both a personal concern for those denominations and, I think, some inside understanding of their approach to faith.

The problem is both simple and profound: their national leaders do not pray:

## 'Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word'

*Lord, keep us steadfast in your Word.* And they don't because they aren't convinced that the Bible is the Word of God. It may contain the Word of God, but certainly not via the historic view of inspiration; and how God speaks is something each person should decide for him- or herself. "Is not my Word like a fire?" asks God through Jeremiah. *Well, not really*, these folks say. *Nice metaphor, though.* One need feel no compulsion against re-interpreting Scripture or the doctrines that have resulted from its study to suit ones values and one's lifestyle, whether hetero- or homosexual.

That explains many Episcopal actions, including, of course, the flash-point, critical act in 2003 of ordaining as bishop a gay man who left his wife and children to live with his homosexual partner. It explains why the General Convention could not muster the support to pass a resolution acknowledging the uniqueness of Christ as the only Savior of the world (the chorale's line *For you are Lord of lords alone* is hopelessly exclusive, monarchical and patriarchal). It explains why the convention did have the votes to declare the Bible to be anti-Semitic. After the convention, when a dissenting bishop told his flock that the Episcopal problem is not, first of all, about human sexuality but about the Word of God he was exactly right.

The national leaders of the Episcopal Church not only believe that Scripture is unreliable as the voice of God, but that they have been given reliable insight into a new way the Spirit is working in the world. Anything that feels to you like an authentic spiritual experience is the measure of the Spirit's work, and of your thoughts, acts and relationships. Astonishingly (from a Reformed point of view), hundreds of thousands of church members don't question this approach. They don't know what they're missing. But an ever growing remnant is questioning, and calling their leaders to repentance. The context of the words I quoted from Jeremiah is sadly, uncomfortably apt:

*"I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a dream. I had a dream!' ... Let the prophet who has a dream tell his dream, but let the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares the LORD. "Is not my word like a fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?" (23:25, 28-29)*

*The word of the LORD is offensive to them. They find no pleasure in it (6:10); Since they have rejected the word of the LORD, what kind of wisdom do they have? (8:9)*

What, indeed!

### Speaking the truth in love?

A hallmark of such leaders (and one

that helps create that complacency on a sinking ship) is the slippery use of language, the couching of thoroughly secular attitudes and intentions in palatable but vague statements of reassurance. New presiding Episcopal Bishop Katherine Jefferts Schori (she of the "mother Jesus" quote) is already exhibiting that characteristic. "All language is metaphorical," she says. So "if we insist that particular words have only one meaning and the way we understand those words is the only possible interpretation, we have elevated that text to an idol. I'm encouraging people to look beyond their favorite understandings." That statement undergirds her unorthodox view of Scripture, but likely sent no red flags to most Episcopalians. It masks unorthodoxy while masquerading as open-mindedness.

Andrew Hutchinson, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, in his own response to current turmoil, said there is a need to affirm classic Anglicanism. That means affirming the historic Christian faith, right? But wait! There's "the other hand," and Hutchinson says it's a challenge. And what's the challenge? Ever greater obedience to God? Ever more workers for the over-ripe harvest? Ever greater scriptural understanding? Well, that last, in a manner of speaking; but not quite. Canadian Anglicans, says their national leader, need "not only to know the Bible but to understand it *rather than accept it uncritically*" (my emphasis).

There is, thanks be to God, a genuine "other hand" made up of Anglicans worldwide who recognize that to truly understand the Bible one must submit wholly, and, yes, *uncritically*, to the will of its Author. The irony is that despite Archbishop Hutchinson's urgings to be critical of the Bible, in the attempt to be all-inclusive Anglican/Episcopal leaders have inundated their church with a flood of uncritical thinking. Dissenting American bishop James M. Stanton (Dallas) understands that. "There can be no question, given the facts as they have emerged since the Convention, that the leadership of the Episcopal Church is set on a course that will not change. In recent years, this leadership has valued diversity almost to the exclusion of any other principle."

In his own attempt to maintain diversity the Archbishop of Canterbury has now proposed a typically Anglican solution for holding his worldwide church together: a two-tiered church. Full members may embrace traditional Christianity; associate members may embrace whatever they wish.

Ah, the *via media*!

Marian Van Til worked for Christian Courier from 1984-2000, and preceded Harry der Nederlanden as its editor. She now lives in Youngstown, NY; she may be contacted via e-mail at <mvantil@adelphia.net>.

## World /Business Directory

## Tolls and taxes keep India from the fast lane

Scott Baldauf

SHAHJAHANPUR, INDIA – At the border checkpoint, Prakash pulls his truck over to the side of the road, and jumps out to make photocopies of all his documentation – two copies each of his driver's license, his vehicle registration, and a list of the taxable goods on his truck, which consists of one massive hunk of rolled steel.

This isn't an international border. Prakash is just crossing from one Indian state to another, from Haryana to Rajasthan, and he's going to pass through two more state borders before he reaches Bombay two days from now.

"This is a big problem for drivers," complains Prakash, as he pays for photocopies at a small push-cart stall run by car battery. "This checkpoint usually takes about one and a half hours. Others take three hours or more, because of the long lines."

He wipes his forehead, and looks at his watch. "You have to pay toll fees, taxes to the state. Sometimes, if the police want a bribe, you pay that, too."



On paper, India is an economic power, with vast natural resources and a massive population of talented workers. In reality, India remains a collection of 28 separate states and seven union territories, each with its own rules and regulations, its own tax code, and in many cases, its own separate language and cultural customs. To solve this problem, India may need a free-trade agreement with itself.

"We are one country, so we ought to be one market, but we're not," says Cyrus Guzder, a transportation specialist at the Confederation of Indian Industries, a business lobby group in New Delhi. "We are 28 different countries. We don't have a unified tax system, we don't have a unified transportsystem, and this

hurts the ability of Indian business to grow."

In many respects, the European Union is a more coherent polity. "India is more complex, larger, and more diverse than all of the European nations put together," says Rajiv Kumar, director of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations in New Delhi.

"Fifty percent of the cost of any product is freight charges, so it's a huge cost," says Mr. Kumar. "So if you remove that cost, for the first time, the advantages of the size of the Indian economy will come through."

## Bribes come out of pocket

Pooran Kirpal Singh is taking Coca-Cola products from a plant in the north-central state of Uttar Pradesh down to the thirsty citizens of Jaipur in Rajasthan, paying 160 rupees (\$3.45) in toll tax at the Shahjahanpur checkpoint, plus hundreds more in excise tax. All of these costs are paid by the truck's owner, he says, but if a corrupt tax authority at one of the checkpoints

demands a bribe to allow an overloaded truck to pass, Mr. Singh has to pay that amount out of pocket.

"I've been working 15 years in this same job, and the waits have gotten longer and longer," Singh says. "Now that business is getting better, there are more trucks on the road, but that just means a longer wait at every state checkpoint."

But in true Indian entrepreneur-

ial spirit, Singh's pain is another businessman's opportunity. At the Shahjahanpur checkpoint, there is a shop selling freshly boiled milky tea; another selling cold sodas; another selling chips and snacks; another offering telephone facilities for truckers to call home; and even a shop offering legal services.

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## Classifieds

Marriage		Anniversaries		
<b>SCHOLTEN - KLOPPER</b> Jack & Theresa Scholten are pleased to announce the upcoming <b>marriage</b> of their daughter <b>Lori</b> to <b>Steve</b> son of Gerald & Marg Klopfer. The wedding will take place DV August 5, 2006 in the Drayton Christian Reformed Church at 2 p.m. Pastor G. Bomhof officiating Future address: RR#2 Moorefield ON N0G 2K0	1956 August 8 2006 We, the children of <b>JAN AND FROUKJE TAMMING (WIGBOLDUS)</b> are pleased to announce their <b>50th Wedding Anniversary</b> . With much joy and thankfulness to God, we invite you to share this special occasion with them. John & MaryAnn Tamming, <i>Strathroy, ON</i> Ashley and Amber Paul & Fran Maciejewski, <i>Strathroy, ON</i> Nicole, Tina and Sarah Albert & Grace Weesjes, <i>Aylmer, ON</i> Danielle, Nicole, Jolene, Michael, Andrea Ekka Tamming - with the LORD (1977) Ralph Tamming & Tanya Goebels, <i>Drumbo, ON</i> Rachel and Trevor Martin & Marie Tamming, <i>Nepean, ON</i> Hayden, Levi and Jesse Ken & Clara Snedden, <i>Vernon, BC</i> Mackenzie Andrew Tamming, <i>Windsor, ON</i> An <b>OPEN HOUSE</b> will be held on Saturday, August 12, 2006 from 2-4 p.m. at Trillium Village 400 Dominion Street, Strathroy, Ontario Home address: Apt #147 - 400 Dominion St STRATHROY ON N7G 3G8 <i>He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."</i> Psalm 91:1,2	<b>BOB AND TRUUS HOEKSTRA</b> We wish to congratulate you on your <b>50th Anniversary</b> on January 25, 2006 From: Jake & Hillie Hoekstra Pete & Joanna Hoekstra Joanne Hoekstra 8 grandchildren & 2 great-grandchildren God bless you Address: 215 Bigford Rd RR#3 Brighton ON K0K 1H0	1956 August 15 2006 With thankfulness to God we celebrate with our children and grandchildren our <b>50th Wedding Anniversary</b> . <b>DURK AND JANNY DE JONG</b> (nee van't Land) Alice & Jim Postma Lindsay, Jenny, Wesley Richard Tim & Rachael Elysha, William Mark & Natalie Address: 133 Signature Close SW Calgary AB T3H 2V6 durkdejong@hotmail.com	
<b>Personals</b> Christian man, 48 (widower) looking for Christian lady for a long term relationship. Reply to: File 2755 c/o Christian Courier 1 Hiscott St. St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7	Single man, 41, never married, looking for Christian life partner. Reply to: File 2747 c/o Christian Courier 1 Hiscott St. St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7	<b>WILLIAM AND MARGE DE JONG</b> (nee Van Rheenen) celebrate <b>40 years</b> together on July 30. Chatham, 1966 - July 30 - Woodstock, 2006 Congratulations Mom and Dad! We praise God for your faithful love to one another and to all of us! Love from your children and grandchildren: Paul & Kathryn De Jong, (Colton and Carter) Scott & Patsy De Jong, (Jesse, Aaron and Karinna) Duane De Jong, (Chelsey and Emily), Michelle & Jeff Sol, (Brayden, Tim, Ashley, Christa and Nathan.) Address: 91 Blackfoot Place, Woodstock ON N4T 1E6	<b>Obituaries</b> Peacefully at Shalom Manor, Grimsby on Thursday, June 29 the LORD took unto himself <b>MARTHA VAN LEEUWEN</b> (nee Van Tol) in her 95th year. Cherished and deeply loved mother of Kees & Bev Van Leeuwen, <i>Grimsby</i> Thea & Dick Buma, <i>Hamilton</i> Peter Kamerman, <i>York</i> Anne Whetton, <i>Grimsby</i> Martha & Jim Van Hoffen, <i>Beamsville</i> Bill & Patricia Van Leeuwen, <i>Grimsby</i> Loving Oma of 24 grandchildren and 28 great-grandchildren. She was predeceased by Dad in 1999, Evelyn in 1995 and son-in-law John in 1978. The funeral was held on Monday, July 10, 2006 in Grimsby. Mailing address: D. Buma 1609 Upper Wellington St Hamilton ON L9B 1N8	
<b>Classifieds</b> <b>DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION</b> <i>Christian Courier</i> is published on alternate Mondays. Copy deadline for each issue is 9 a.m. Tuesday, 13 days prior to publication date. <b>RATE:</b> (GST added to rates listed) All personal and family announcements: \$6.00 per square inch. rose@christiancourier.ca Display advertising re. businesses and organizations: \$8.00 per square inch. email: ads@christiancourier.ca <b>PHOTOS:</b> There is a processing fee of \$25 for the inclusion of a photograph with a personal or family announcement. Photo space is not charged per square inch but we reserve the right to determine published photo size. Please note that we cannot use a faxed photo. We need either an original photo (which we will return) or a downloadable internet image. <b>PERSONAL ADS:</b> <i>Christian Courier</i> would be pleased to handle your personal ad in an efficient and discreet manner. The cost to set up a personal file under a unique file number is \$25. Ads requesting correspondence with this file are run at \$8 P.I. per insertion. All correspondence is immediately forwarded unopened. <b>NEWLYWEDS &amp; NEW PARENTS:</b> We offer a \$25 one-year subscription to couples whose wedding is announced in <i>Christian Courier</i> and to parents who announce a child's birth in our paper. If you want to take advantage of this offer, please let us know when placing your ad. <b>SUBMITTING YOUR AD</b> fax: 905-682-8313 e-mail: see above Mail: Christian Courier 1 Hiscott St St. Catharines ON L2R 1C7 <b>OTHER INFORMATION:</b> <i>Christian Courier</i> reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.		1956 August 22 2006 With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation. Isaiah 12:3  We thank God for the privilege of celebrating <b>50 years of marriage</b> , praising him for his gracious care and faithfulness during all these years. <b>JOHN AND ALI WOULDSTRA</b> (nee Meyerink) Children: Irene & Ed VanderVeen, <i>Edmonton, AB</i> Danielle, Natalie, John, Meagan and Patrick Margaret (& Jim) Rietveld, <i>Sherwood Park, AB</i> James & Amanda with great-grandchildren Max and Olivia Colin, Erica Martin & Frances Woudstra, <i>Edmonton, AB</i> Derek, Nadine, Craig, Angela, Thomas Fred & Carolyn Woudstra, <i>Edmonton, AB</i> Jonathan, Leah, Kristen Brian & Marie Woudstra, <i>Surrey, BC</i> Joel, Lisa, Misha Helen & Blaise MacMullin, <i>Athabasca, AB</i> Izaak, Moira, Claire Brenda & David Paszek, <i>Edmonton, AB</i> Alicea, Anton, Micah Address: 4234 - 117 Ave NW, Edmonton AB T5W 0Y4 Telephone: 1-780-479-7539		
<b>Event</b> <b>DAY OF ENCOURAGEMENT</b> October 21, 2006 Celebrating our God while becoming equipped for ministry It is an opportunity for all deacons, elders and all other church members to be encouraged, inspired and trained for service. It happens at Hamilton District Christian High School in Ancaster. <b>Theme: Come to the Water</b> Choose from 49 workshops and 15 Service Sites. Cost \$50. Contact your deacons for a registration form or contact Diaconal Ministries at (905) 336-2920. More details are available at www.diaconalministries.com.		But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace. Psalm 37:11 <b>DICK JOHN HARTEMINK</b> Born: Oct. 9, 1925 Varsseveld, The Netherlands Died: July 5, 2006 Aylmer, Ontario Husband for 54 years of Dina (Heusinkveld) Children: Henry & Annette Hartemink of <i>Aylmer</i> Carrie & Darwin VanWynsberghe (Jeremy, Meika) Denise & Jonathan Van Dyk (Kevin, Kade) Kate & Steve Pastoor Melanie Richard & MaryBeth Ken Evan Bruce & Tina Hartemink of <i>Aylmer</i> Jennessa Ryan Eric & Evelina Hartemink of <i>Belmont</i> Karen & Steven Werkema Evelyn Brenda Cheryl Deric Gary Hartemink of <i>Aylmer</i> Lynda & Pete Eygenraam of <i>Harriston</i> Janine Dianne Rachel Gregory Erna & Michael VanGorkum of <i>Hamilton</i> Funeral services were held on July 10, 2006 at the Aylmer Christian Reformed Church, Aylmer, Ont. Rev. Richard deLange and Pastor Louis Bosma officiated. Correspondence: Dina Hartemink, 110 Caverly Rd Aylmer ON N5H 2P4		

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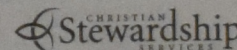
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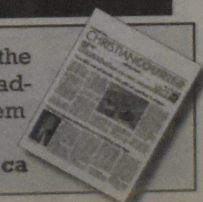
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## Events/Advertising

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Aug. 13** Dutch Service will be held in the Ancaster Christian Reformed Church at 3:00 p.m. Rev. Harry Vander Windt will be preaching.

**Aug. 26, 27** Forest Christian Reformed Church closing ceremonies. See ad this issue.

**Oct 21 Day of Encouragement** - Celebrating our God while becoming equipped for ministry. It is an opportunity for all deacons, elders and all other church members to be encouraged, inspired and trained for service. It happens at Hamilton District Christian High School in **Ancaster**. Theme: Come to the Water. Choose from 49 workshops and 15 Service Sites. Cost \$50. Contact your deacons for a registration form or contact Diaconal Ministries at (905) 336-2920. More details are available at [www.diaconalministries.com](http://www.diaconalministries.com).

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Osoyoos - CJOR	8:00 am	1490
Prince George - CIRX	7:00 am	94.3
Princeton - CHOR	8:00 am	1400
Smithers - CFBV	9:15 am	1230
Vernon - CJIB	9:30 pm	94

## ALBERTA

Brooks - CIBQ	8:30 am	1340
Edmonton - CJCA	6:00 pm	930

## MANITOBA

Winnipeg - CKJS	9:00 am	810
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## ONTARIO

Atikokan - CFAK	9:30 am	1240
Chatham - CFCO	6:30 am	630
Hamilton - CHAM	7:30 am	820
London - CKSL	7:00 am	1410
Owen Sound - CFOS	7:00 am	560
Sarnia - CHOK	7:30 am	1070
Stratford - CJCS	8:45 am	1240
Wingham - CKNX	10:30 am	920
Woodstock - CJFH	7:30 am	94.03

## NEW BRUNSWICK

Saint John - CHSJ	9:00 am	94.1
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## PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Charlottetown - CFCY	7:00 am	630
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## NOVA SCOTIA

Digby - CKDY	6:00 am	1420
Halifax - CFDR	8:30 am	780
Liverpool - CKBW	7:30 am	94.5
Kentville - CKEN	8:30 am	1490
Middleton - CKAD	8:30 am	1350

Shelburne - CKBW	7:30 am	93.1
Sydney - CJC	7:00 am	1270
Weymouth - CKDY	8:30 am	103.1
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Nordegg CHBW 93.9 FM Sun. 8:30 am  
Rocky Mtn. House CHBW 94.5 FM Sun. 8:30 am

## BRITISH COLUMBIA

Prince Rupert CIAJ 100.7 FM Sat. 10 am

## MANITOBA

Steinbach CHSM 1250 AM Sun. 4 pm

## NOVA SCOTIA

Bridgewater CKBW 1000 AM Sun. 5:30 am

## ONTARIO

Oshawa CKDO 1350 AM Sat. 8 am

Woodstock CJFH 94.3 FM Sat. 8 am

## SASKATCHEWAN

Estevan CJSL 1280 AM Sun. 7 am

Weyburn CJSL 1190 AM Sun. 7 am

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20:00-21:00hrs The Dutch Program

BELLEVILLE - CJLX 101.9FM & 92.3FM

Sun. 19:00hrs - Zingend Geloven

19:30 - Holland Calling

VANCOUVER, BC - CJVB 1470AM

Mon - Wed. 20:00-21:00hrs

EDMONTON, AB - CKER 101.9FM

Sat. 09:00-10:00hrs (Religious)

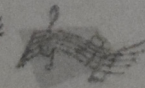
10:00-12:00hrs - Dutch Pop Music

11:00 - Dutch news & sports

WINNIPEG, MB - CKJS 910AM

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## DUTCH SERVICE

August 13, 2006 at 3:00 p.m.

Ancaster Christian Reformed Church  
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## News

# Europe rethinks its 'safe haven' status

Sarah Wildman

VIENNA – The night air in Vienna has finally turned warm, filling the city's trams with visitors. On the Ringstrasse, tourists take in the city, pointing out the City Hall and the parliament.

"Did you see that one girl – so young! And wearing a veil," a woman clucks in lightly accented English, staring out the window of tram D. "They will form a separate culture."

The sentiment isn't isolated. Last month, Austria's Interior Minister Liese Prokop announced that 45 percent of Muslim immigrants were "unintegratable," and suggested that those people should "choose another country."

In the Netherlands, one of Europe's most integrated refugees and a critic of radical Islam, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, resigned her seat in parliament in the wake of criticism that she faked details on her asylum application to the Netherlands in 1992. And France's lower house of parliament passed a strict new immigration law, now awaiting Senate approval.

Indeed, recent rumblings from the top echelons of governments across Europe suggest that the continent is rethinking its once-vaunted status as a haven for refugees as it becomes more suspicious that many immigrants are coming to exploit its social benefits and democratic principles.

"The trend today more and more in Europe is to try to control immigration flow," says Philippe De Bruycker, founder of the Odysseus Network, an academic consortium on immigration and asylum in Europe. "At the same time we still say we want to respect the right of asylum and the possibility of applying for asylum. But of course along the way we create obstacles for asylum seekers," he acknowledges.

The Hirsi Ali case has highlighted the dramatic change in Europe since the turn of this century.

In the years following the World War II, a chastened US and Europe vowed to follow the Geneva Conventions and create safe havens for refugees. Yet such lofty ideals were hard to uphold after massive influxes of workers in the 1960s and early 1970s were halted during an economic downturn.

Those immigrant populations – often Muslims from North Africa and the Middle East – swelled with family reunification, yet often remained economically and socially distinct from the societies that they had adopted. The image of the immigrant began to change, and distinctions between those who came for work and those who came for safety began to blur.

Now, says Jean-Pierre Cassarino, a researcher at the European-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration in Florence, Italy, "asylum seekers are viewed as potential cheaters."

Today, in once-homogenous Europe, tensions between immigrants and native Europeans appear to be increasing. The perception that an ever increasing number of newcomers – who neither speak the lan-



Crowded street in Holland

guage of their adopted country nor accept its cultural mores – are changing. The culture has increased support for ideas once only advanced by far-right political parties.

"France, Austria, and the Netherlands all have had very significant electoral success of the far-right parties," says Michael Collyer, a research fellow in European migration policy at the University of Sussex.

Collyer points to the success in France of a strict new immigration law proposed by Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy. Mr. Sarkozy's proposal would institutionalize "selective" immigration, giving an advantage to privileged immigrants of better economic and education status who are more "integratable."

It would also change the rights of family reunification for workers already in the country; speed up the expulsion of undocumented immigrants who are discovered or whose applications for asylum are rejected; lengthen the amount of time it takes to apply for permanent residency status for married couples; and toughen visa requirements. Most controversial, Sarkozy announced deportations for undocumented immigrant school children.

"We speak of the need to fight immigration, but we don't have a clear position on whether we need immigrants," says Mr. De Bruycker, noting the precipitous dip in population growth in European Union countries in the last half century. He adds that a series of recent incidents have affected the image of immigrants in the European mind. The murder of a Jewish man – Ilan Halimi – on the outskirts of Paris earlier this spring, for example, by a band of immigrant youths. Or the murder of a Malian woman and a Flemish child in Antwerp last week by the son of a founder of Belgium's most far-right party.

"In Europe, we are still unable to accept that we are a continent of immigration," says De Bruycker.

## News briefs

### Losing our identity?

Bad news for Canadian identity. Not long ago we heard that Labatt's – the all-Canadian beer – had been swallowed up by an American company. Now Americans are quickly soaking up Tim Horton's coffee by the barrel. And in North Carolina they're probably swigging it out of the Stanley Cup.

If Tim Horton's coffee becomes as popular in the U.S. as it is north of the border, how will Canadians assert their identity?

The CBC? It's beginning to imitate Hollywood!

### Preaching Idol

According to a recent poll, the Dutch are becoming more Puritanical. They used to pride themselves on being non-judgmental about different lifestyles. They are increasingly making judgments on those who, as they see it, live a consumerist and polluting lifestyle. Many are disgusted by commercialism, materialism and wastefulness – especially of others.

So while they aren't moralistic about sex, they are moralistic, but their areas of concern differ quite a bit from those of the original Puritans.

Still, while Canadians are having singing and dancing competitions in search of the latest Canadian Idol, in The Netherlands they're looking for the latest and the greatest preacher. That's right – there's a preaching competition underway. Who will be the next preacher idol? I'm not sure that the contest has made the ratings; in fact, television networks don't seem to be very interested.

There are different categories. No, not country and western, rock and roll or hip-hop. There are narrative sermons, evangelical sermons and socially relevant sermons. The newspaper story didn't say whether the winning preacher gets to go on tour like the Canadian Idol winners.

I do think it would make a great show for Sunday afternoons.

### Discipline me and I'll sue

A member of an evangelical church who was put under church discipline for committing adultery is suing the church and the pastor. He didn't take too kindly to the church's correction. The wayward hubby got steamed when his infidelity was revealed to others.

He says it damaged his reputation. The preacher said it damaged Jesus' reputation.

In an age of privacy and lawsuits, church discipline is becoming a high risk option.

### What women really want

What women really want. Yes, I realize this is dangerous territory, but it comes from a very reliable source: a poll in *Woman's Day Magazine*. When women ask their hubbies or boyfriends, "Does this make me look fat?" most really want to hear their honest opinion. (Remember, men: this is what the women SAY they want.)

Here's a clue: according to the same poll, when women say "I'm fine," what most of them really mean to say is that something is bothering them and they want to talk about it.

When asked what's missing most from their relationship, 35 percent of women say physical intimacy (like holding hands and hugging). About the same percentage want men to take out the trash.

I wonder how women expect a man to be physically intimate when he's holding a trash bag in his hands.

Here's the clincher: 64 percent of the women polled said they would rather be with a man who is poor than with one who is rich – as long as the poor man is better looking.

Is there hope for men who are not good looking and who forget to take out the trash? Yes, scientists have discovered a love potion. It's a nasal spray that lowers the level of cortisol in the body. Cortisol has been called the stress hormone: it's gets you tensed up and ready for conflict.

One little squirt up your nose (or your spouse's nose) and, presto, domestic tranquility.

At least you'll be smiling as you take out the garbage.